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THE SECRET OF SAINT FLOREL.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE railway station at Redford was but a blot upon an uninteresting landscape. The country roundabout was bleak and flat, the fields large, the hedges meagre, the farmhouses sparsely scattered and smug in all the comfort of new red brick, so that in the distance the buildings seemed to have been just unpacked from a child's toy-box. Several express trains whizzed daily past the draughty, lonely little platform, but only three passenger-trains, and those of the slowest, stopped there. It was seldom that any, save farmers from market or strangers unaware of the locality, got out at Redford ; but on this July afternoon the approaching train was bearing with it a much more adventurous person, no stranger to the neighbourhood, though it was some years since he had last seen it.

He had travelled from London in a third-class carriage, all of whose occupants, save one, an elderly countrywoman, had alighted at earlier stages of the journey. His age was probably about thirty, though the marks of dissipation on his face gave it an older and more worn appearance. He was dressed in a shabby suit of cheap clothes obviously purchased at a slop-shop,

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and his boots were patched. Yet the man was evidently a gentleman ; there was an inappropriateness about the dingy clothes, a sharp contrast between the well-shaped hands and the frayed cuffs of the coarse, coloured shirt, which emphasised the fact. He had large dark eyes and a well-shaped nose, while his mouth and chin were hidden by a thick, short, black beard and moustache. As he stared out of the window noting the familiar landscape, his thoughts flew back to many things which had happened since he had last beheld them. The countrywoman opposite, whose luggage consisted of a large basket and a pair of pattens, felt alarmed as she watched his face work and his eyes gleam while he lived over again a certain period of his life. She clutched the pattens tightly with a vague idea of their use for purposes of defence, and felt vastly relieved when her station was reached and she was able to leave her uncomfortable companion alone with his thoughts.

The train, which had blown out leisurely gusts of steam while waiting, now moved on again with short sharp gasps, sending small curls of white smoke eddying over the hedges between which it ran, and the third-class passenger laughed softly to himself as they rolled forward. It was

not exactly a pleasant sound, certainly not an indication of mirth or light-heartedness; it was a low bitter chuckle, suggestive of disagreeable memories.

As the train lumbered on its slow way across the green country beneath the rosy evening sky, the stranger saw none of nature's beauties, nor did the coming hush of fields and woods bring any repose to his mind. He did not feel alone in the darkening compartment, for there before his eyes was being played the tragedy in which he had taken the chief part. He saw, close to him under a tropical sky, the pale face of a beautiful, dark-eyed woman, bearing a look of uneasiness that changed to terror as he raised his hand and relaxed his set smile. Then in his ears there echoed a sudden deafening mighty roar. He heard it: he felt the shock of it strike the ground beneath his feet; but he saw nothing save the flying figure of a man he was pursuing, who turned his livid face over his shoulder and shrieked as he knew himself losing ground. And he, the pursuer, with the warm red stain of death upon his right hand, sped onward, unconscious of all save the mad lust of hatred in his heart. Again he went through that wild brief chase; his breath came quickly as he lived those moments over once more and felt the terror-stricken man ahead almost within his grasp. Then an infinitesimal halt on that man's part as he stooped in a fancied stumble and clutched a stone; next the deadly shock of sickening pain that struck him on the chest, before he fell, knowing nothing more. . . . Then dreams,—the thunder that roared day and night in his ears, till his brain reeled with the heavy sound; the weary aching of his feet that pursued his enemy with a deadly striving that might not cease; the dying shriek of

a woman; the blast of air that struck his hot face, as the earth quivered and the atmosphere grew thick with dust. All these things mocked him in a wild phantasmagoria that seemed to be with him many days; and then at last came sleep, a merciful unconsciousness, that ended in his opening clear and sensible eyes beneath the palm-leaf thatch of an Indian hut. A woman's face bent over him, black, hideous, seamed with a thousand wrinkles, its unsightliness accentuated by the flaring scarlet kerchief that framed it. The decrepit old woman compounded her herbs and simples, and he swallowed the nauseous decoctions obediently; were they not strengthening him, to follow once more on the track of his vengeance that had been so tragically closed? Every day that thought absorbed him more and more, growing with his returning vitality and taking full possession of him. And then he recalled how one day his aged hostess, who had nursed him back to life, held a conversation with a coloured relative from the town many miles away, and how he overheard much respecting himself which he had deemed unknown, and which gave him valuable hints for future guidance. Then, when his foiled plans of revenge faded from their impossibility, came the homeward turning of his thoughts, the reviving memory of the one pure love he had ever known, the simple womanly beauty of his cousin. She had not cared for him, he knew, but she was very young; he did not despair. For nearly five years he had not seen her; she must be even lovelier now than when they had last met. Others too might have seen that loveliness and envied it, might even have won it. The thought was terrible, and he resolved to set his mind at rest. His thoughts travelled in a lightning's flash over the dis-

comforts of a passage worked home as cook's mate in a merchant-steamer. The gray expanse of the Thames with its smoky sky was a more welcome sight than the cloudless atmosphere he had left; and now, travel-stained, weary, and penniless, he was within a few miles of his destination.

The sun had set when he got out at Redford, where he invested his last three pence in as much brandy as they would purchase at the public-house close to the station. He tossed it off now, and then started on his five mile tramp to Coltham. The dusk was beginning to creep over the meadows, and the dew was bringing rare perfume from the sleeping flowers. The great stag-beetles were booming heavily about in their gleaming coats of mail, and the moths were beginning to fly abroad. Every now and then a bat flitted silently across the road, and the frogs croaked at intervals from the long damp grass in the ditches. The wayfarer plodded doggedly forward, his footfall inaudible upon the thick white dust. He had passed four milestones, and already he could see ahead the clustering trees of Coltham with the church-tower standing out black and clear against the pale moonlit sky. Away to the left, beyond that line of wood which marked the boundary of the park, must lie the red house within whose walls he would sleep that night. The thought gave him fresh vigour and he walked forward again more quickly. No one was about as he skirted the village street and saw the lights in the bar of the Red Lion. He went on, past the church and the graveyard where so many lay at rest, up the dark lane overhung with trees, and over the broad ditch with its stagnant green surface, and then along the narrow winding path through the plantation. As he stood behind the rhododendrons skirting the lawn

he heaved a deep sigh of relief, and then creeping silently forward he prepared to reconnoitre his ground. Straight in front of him were the windows of the dining-room; their curtains were closed, but by the bright light which shone across the lawn, he knew that the inner blinds were not down. He crossed the grass all gray with dew, and stepping with infinite precaution upon the narrow flagged path which separated the house from the lawn, he peered eagerly between the curtains.

Old Dennis Dene sat as usual in his high-backed oak chair on one side of the hearth that was full of fresh green boughs. His violin was under his chin, and the bow quivering through his fingers as he played to Phœbe sitting in a low basket-chair opposite. She was almost lying in the deep chair, with her head thrown back upon its cushions, whose dark crimson threw into relief the outline of her delicate profile and slender white throat. As he gazed a change crept over his face. The hard reckless look of dissipation gave place to an expression of yearning tenderness that softened and transfigured it. He watched the rise and fall of Phœbe's breast under the white laces that covered it; he noted the subtle difference that love's dignity and sorrow make in a human face; he saw the exquisite curve of her ear against her rippling hair, her smooth fair brow, her listless hands folded carelessly together in her lap. And as he gazed all the long slumbering strength of his devotion woke again at the sight of her entrancing beauty; and standing there, an outcast under the stormy sky, the man swore to himself a solemn oath that nothing, living or dead, should come between him and his love.

As he turned away across the lawn, its drenched grass soaking through

his cheap patched boots, the evening chill struck him, and he shivered with disagreeable recollections of tropical fever. Clearly it was not desirable that he should stay out of doors any longer, and he now began to wonder which would be the best way to introduce himself. To ring the bell at the front door, and declaring himself to the servant, proceed to walk into the house, was obviously the simplest way out of his difficulty; but there were objections. He did not care to show himself in his present trim to a subordinate, if it could be avoided. He was no longer Thomas Crookson, entered on the muster-roll of the steamer *California* as cook's mate; he forsook that character with alacrity, to assume his rightful name and position of Anthony Holson of Denehurst, to whom his present outfit was most unsuitable. He wondered if Mason Sawbridge was at home. He knew his cousin's habits well, for, in respect of the general routine of life, they closely resembled his own. At this hour Mason ought to be in the library smoking an after-dinner pipe. If he could get in at the French window of that room and make himself known to his cousin, his subsequent presentation to the household might be more satisfactorily arranged. Accordingly he stole round the corner of the house, and then, treading rather heavily on the flagged path to give notice of some one's presence in the garden, he slowly approached the closely shuttered library-window.

Mason Sawbridge sat in his huge leather chair smoking and thinking, as was his wont at that hour, of his missing cousin. He was a man of exceedingly methodical and regular habits, so much so that even his thoughts were apt to follow well-worn grooves at certain times. It was nearly two years since the day

that James Bryant and Hugh Strong had come to Denehurst with the parcel entrusted to them by the Consul in Réunion. He remembered every detail of the visit, and how Phœbe in a fit of feminine malice had introduced the strangers to the family skeleton, and had even with her own hands flung open the cupboard-door for their better view. Ever since that day he had hoped for Holson's return, and clung firmly to the idea that he was not dead. Even now, though no word or sign of the missing man had been received, he would not allow himself to believe in his death. With matters in their present condition, and Phœbe now an heiress instead of a penniless charge on the Denehurst estate, there was tenfold more reason for Anthony's return; and Mason had just reached that mental conclusion when a faint sound from the garden made him first listen more intently for a second, and then stretch out his hand towards a pocket hung against the wall for the reception of loose papers.

In common with many other men Mason held that the most annoying profession in the world, for other people, was that of a housemaid. Under pretence of dusting and sweeping papers were lost, letters disarranged, and a general condition of chaos introduced in his particular sanctum. Having discovered this fact, and endured its consequences for some months, he resolved to put an immediate end to his sufferings by an order which forbade the admission of any woman-servant to the room, and only tolerated the old butler to light the fire. After the dismissal of two housemaids and a boy in buttons for the infringement of this Draconian law, Mason had succeeded in converting the library into a very untidy, dusty, comfortable apartment where he could leave his papers about as he chose,

and find them a fortnight later in the same place. This digression will explain the fact of the presence of a loaded pistol underneath the papers in the pocket that hung by the fireplace. Mason was not an especially nervous individual, but he liked to have the pistol there. It was unsuspected, unknown save to himself, a private resource. His hand had just fallen upon its smooth, cool, ivory handle, when the sound in the garden resolved itself into footsteps coming along the flagged path outside. He would have known those footsteps upon the floor of Heaven or the other place, and he knew them now. He drew back his hand, and started upright in the chair, while his breath came quickly and his heart beat uncomfortably fast. Few of us can stand face to face with the expected in the same mood in which we have long waited for it.

The thirty seconds during which Mason listened to that slowly approaching footfall seemed to him an eternity, full of confused and rushing thought and speculation. Would Anthony be changed? What had happened to him? And so his whirling wonder sped on, till a hand shook at the wooden shutters, and a low voice, which to his strained nerves sounded unnaturally distinct, called him by his name. Then he slowly rose, and crossing the floor on heavy feet, drew up the blind, and, opening the window and the shutter, let his cousin into the room.

CHAPTER XXV.

ANTHONY had been at home for a fortnight, a period which had been fully occupied by Mason and himself in mutual inspection of the estate and of such business transactions as had taken place during the former's

absence. His re-appearance had not caused any great thrill of surprise in the neighbourhood, where his friends were very few and his acquaintances not especially cordial. Every one knew in a vague way that strange things had happened abroad, and those who had heard the rumour of Holson's death murmured that it was sometimes convenient to be temporarily deceased. That he had ever been suspected of murder no one had any idea save Mason himself; even Phœbe had never heard the report. The hunchback firmly believed in his cousin's innocence, yet hitherto he had somehow shrunk from broaching the subject, though he felt plainly that it must be done.

One evening as Anthony and himself sat smoking in the library he suddenly spoke.

"By the way, Tony, those people who brought your papers and things home from Réunion told an extraordinary tale about you."

"Did they?" said the other carelessly. "I suppose odd tales are told of every one. The tale of your humble servant must have been very strange indeed if it was half as strange as the truth!" Then seeing that Mason did not answer, he asked languidly, "What was the tale?"

"That you had committed murder."

Anthony whistled as he knocked the ashes out of his pipe and prepared to re-fill it. "Not bad!" he said. "And who was the victim?"

"A Creole woman called Julie."

"Why, poor Julie was buried alive under the landslip that interred £3,000 of mine in sugar plantations! At least my old Indian nurse told me that not a soul escaped."

"The two men who were staying with you at the time of the landslip, a Mr. Bryant and a young fellow, a friend of his, called Strong, told me

that the woman was buried,—but not alive.”

“But, man,” interrupted Holson impatiently, “you don’t know what you’re talking of! I tell you Saint Florel was simply overwhelmed in a single instant. I’d been down there all day looking after one thing and another, including of course Julie, who was the handsome demon that sort of woman always is. She was extra cantankerous that evening because I had refused some impossible present she had set her heart on. When she found I really meant ‘No’ she tried sulking, then a regular fit of temper which wound up with taunts at my meanness, and an old trick of hers—a threat of suicide.”

“Mr. Bryant and his friend found her body under a shallow covering of earth, stabbed to the heart and with your knife lying beside her,” said Mason.

“So she really did it at last,” said Anthony musingly; “and with my knife you say. I must have left it lying somewhere about her rooms I suppose, but to tell you the truth I don’t recollect my last few minutes in Saint Florel very clearly. Julie was not particular what she said at any time, and that night, being angry, she was less particular than usual and abused me like a pickpocket; in fact she put me into a regular rage, and I pelted away from her as hard as I could go, for she maddened me sometimes. When I heard the roar of the landslide I was well clear of the garden, and then I made tracks, I can tell you, for the sound was not exactly one that invited you to stand and admire the prospect. Then I was struck on the chest by a lump of falling rock and knew nothing more, as I have already told you. Unless you’re very anxious for more minute particulars, Mason, I would rather not refer to that especial night of my

existence again; it is not a very soothing memory to dwell upon.”

“No; it must have been a trying time,” answered the hunchback, as he slowly drew the thumb and forefinger of one hand over those points of his sparse beard that joined the corners of his thin-lipped mouth. His tone was hardly sympathetic and the other noticed it.

“Do you mean to say,” demanded Anthony irritably, “that a charge of suspected murder was brought against me simply because the woman chose to stab herself with my knife? I never heard such rubbish. Why, what jury would consider such evidence, do you suppose?”

“Of course it was absurd,” answered Mason.

“It was idiotic,” went on Anthony waxing more wroth. “You don’t mean to say that you for one instant believed it, do you?” he went on, turning his angry and compelling eyes upon his cousin.

Mason felt obliged to meet his gaze, though he would much rather have avoided it; and while he submitted to it, he was painfully conscious that Anthony’s bullying was not the fine art to which that practice can be brought, but presented its more direct and brutal aspect.

“You don’t mean to say you believed it?” repeated Anthony.

This time both eyes and voice conveyed a challenge which the other had no mind to take up. “Why, no,” he said, doubt entering his soul at the moment that his lips denied it.

“And how far, may I ask,” went on Anthony, “has the neighbourhood been edified by this story?”

“No one has heard a whisper of it but myself,” answered Mason.

“And Phoebe—”

“Knows nothing of it, so far as I am aware,” said Mason, with a slight hesitation.

"If you are the only person who knows it, and you have not told Phœbe yourself," asked her cousin sharply, "how is she to know?"

"Perhaps Mr. Strong—"

"D—n Mr. Strong," said Anthony explosively. "Do you mean to say that he and Phœbe have been discussing my character together?"

"I really don't know what they may or may not have said," replied Mason, who felt that a trying moment had arrived. "They were, I believe, engaged to be married." The truth was out now, and knowing his cousin's unbridled nature, Mason waited with some apprehension for the next words.

"And you,—you whom I have always trusted—who have been pretending to look so faithfully after my interests during my absence,—who say that you never believed me dead,—you allowed this?"

"But I assure you—" protested Mason.

"You knew she was the most precious interest of all to me; you knew I went away to try and wait till she was old enough to know her own mind; you knew I didn't care a penny about the cursed land and money and things; you knew—" He spoke with a kind of concentrated rage, his very calm tingled.

"Strong's done for," Mason blurted out, to avoid further reproach. "It doesn't really matter; they can never marry."

"Is he dead?" demanded Anthony not without relief.

"No, but as good as dead, so far as Phœbe is concerned. He got a knock on the head in a railway accident, and has lost his memory completely."

"And where is he now?"

"Oh, in Timbuctoo, or some place, recruiting his health; but his memory may return. If you can reserve any further reproaches for a short time,

Anthony, I will tell you the whole facts of the case, and you will see they are not so bad after all." And he proceeded to put his cousin in possession of all the details of poor Phœbe's rather piteous little romance.

"Well, I must try and make my running as fast as I can," said Anthony thoughtfully, when the other had finished. "I know something of women. If this young fellow were to turn up suddenly with his mental blank filled up, I should be sent to the right about."

"You must marry her before that can happen," observed Mason. "His turning up, mad or sane, won't much matter when once she is Mrs. Holson."

"No," said Anthony decisively; "it should certainly make no difference. By the way, as she has grown so wonderfully lovely during my absence, I suppose she has perhaps had other admirers. Has any one else proposed to her?"

Now if Mason had felt quite certain that his cousin could have heard nothing of him from Phœbe, he would certainly have avoided mentioning her second suitor; but as things were he felt that this matter too must be faced. The wound that she had inflicted upon his personal vanity rankled sorely still, and he nerved himself to bear a fresh rub on its quivering surface from Anthony, as he answered,

"Yes; she has had another suitor. I proposed to her."

"You!" cried Anthony, so smitten with surprise that his monosyllable conveyed neither reproach nor mockery.

"Yes, I," answered the hunchback bitterly. "Of course she refused me. You can guess why."

There was a moment's pause; Holson broke it. "Poor chap!" he said briefly, but there was a world of sympathy in his tone, and those two words bound the deformed man oppo-

site more strongly than ever to him, the while he smarted at being considered beneath jealousy.

"I think I'll say good-night now," he said, rising for his candle, and feeling that the evening had been a rather fatiguing one to him mentally speaking; and he went up stairs leaving Anthony still smoking in the great Cordova leather throne. Once alone however, his pipe died out unheeded, for the recent conversation had left him much to think of. Mason's vanity, of which he had made such a startling revelation that evening, was almost inexplicable to his cousin. Did the hunchback really suppose that, apart from his deformity, he was a desirable husband? In his way Anthony was fond of the study of human character, and had had infinite opportunities of pursuing it in every phase of its development; but he was fain to confess that here was one of the most peculiar subjects he had ever encountered. And then his thoughts travelled rapidly to Phoebe, who indeed was seldom long out of them, though thanks to the supreme self-control he was exercising the girl had no idea of it. She had felt his return as a kind of shock, not altogether an agreeable one; but his quiet self-restraint and consideration had already gone far towards obliterating her previous unpleasant impression of him, and rendering her less on the defensive. She did not really like him; of that Anthony was convinced; but he was equally well aware that her dislike had lost its former active quality, and for the rest, love had made his strong uncurbed nature unnaturally wise and patient. Ever since he had watched her grow from child to woman, this man had held her dear, and wanted her for his own; her coldness was only another incentive to his passion. It was lest he should shock and repel

her by some ungovernable outbreak of himself that he had left England for a time, hoping for a better prospect on his return. His career abroad had not been of the cleanest, but the one clear and wholesome influence in his life, that had sometimes had power to stay him even during his wildest excesses, had been the memory of that innocent and beautiful girl. How many times had he seen her walking through the canebreaks? How many times had she haunted the solitude of his lonely room, till half in anger, half in despair, he had dashed away in search of any distraction to banish her tantalising presence? How often had he looked into other women's eyes, to stifle the thought of the woman whose eyes were not to grow loving for him? Only he himself knew what a soiled tangle the past five years of his life had been; but it was the thought of her that had brought him home again, to find how nearly he had been defrauded of his due.

Anthony was certainly not a shining example of Christian faith, but like some much more estimable people he had a keen belief in the existence of a benign Providence, whenever such benignity appeared to have tempered misfortune on his behalf. When Providence ordered matters less favourably, he called it by quite a different name. On the present occasion he felt honestly grateful to the heavenly powers for Hugh's misfortune, taking it indeed as a sign and augury of his own success. Was his devotion of years to go unrewarded? Was he to return for his own, or what he had taught himself to regard as his own, merely to find that an interloper had snatched it from him?

After an hour of such meditation he too went to bed in a hopeful and satisfied frame of mind. Every pot

of ointment however has its fly, and Anthony's soothed and mollified mental condition was unpleasantly intruded upon in a dreamland which resembled Saint Florel, where the voice of a murdered woman cried out for vengeance from her forgotten tomb.

"Phœbe," said Anthony a few days later, "come out for a walk with me. My uncle has gone to sleep in his chair, so he can't want you for a little while. It's a lovely evening."

Phœbe hesitated. She was not particularly anxious to walk with her cousin. On the other hand, it was the first time he had suggested her doing so since his return, and she did not wish to seem ungracious, especially as he had by no means forced himself upon her society. Indeed it had seemed to her that he rather avoided her, which she thought might be a sign of decreasing attraction in herself. She felt that such a desirable attitude deserved some reward, and therefore prepared to accompany him.

Anthony was right; it was a lovely evening. Autumn was in its ripest stage of perfection. The great yellow sunflowers and scarlet dahlias were aglow like flames in the few borders where some attempt at order was still maintained, while in the wilder and weed-grown spaces the lovely unpruned spires of the Michaelmas daisy showed how beautiful they could be when not plagued by the gardener's shears. Self-sown nasturtiums and chance clumps of mignonette ran riot among the shrubs, where the perennial phloxes lifted their many-coloured sprays, and a few hollyhocks still made a brave show. The robins sang loud and clear, and only a few leaves had as yet fallen, while those that hung on the trees were turning golden and russet in the still hot rays of a slanting sun.

They crossed the garden and went out of the great front gates into the carriage-road that wound across the park. The nibbling sheep lifted their heads to stare, and a small boy who was herding half a dozen black pigs grubbing for acorns under the trees, turned to look after them as they passed. For some time they pursued their way in a silence which Phœbe was unwilling and Anthony apparently unable to break. She was just beginning to feel a little apprehensive when he spoke.

"Phœbe, what do you think of my uncle?"

"Think of him?" she asked puzzled.

"Yes, how do you think he is? Mentally, I mean."

"I don't see much change," she answered a little doubtfully. "Sometimes he quite surprises me by understanding something I expected would puzzle him; and then at another time he does not seem to understand the simplest matter. Lately Mason has given up playing cards with him, and since then he is much less excitable. You are not going to begin that trick again, I hope, Anthony?"

"Oh no," he answered quietly. "Since I was away and able to think over matters, and view them as it were from a distance, I have found myself much to blame about my uncle. Do you think he remembers me perfectly, Phœbe?"

"I am sure he does," she replied.

"And how is he disposed towards me?"

"Not very well," she answered truthfully. "You see he remembers exceedingly well certain things; and as you say, Anthony, you did not always behave well to him."

"True," he answered. "However, I must try and disarm him now by taking as little notice as possible of him."

Then there was another silence, Phæbe wondering what this changed demeanour might mean.

"This place is rather lonely, Phæbe. Don't you think so?"

"Well," she answered, "one is less lonely alone in a place like this, than among a big crowd where one doesn't know a soul. I dare say it strikes you as lonely, who have been accustomed to moving about a good deal and seeing heaps of people."

"But how do you find it?" he asked gently.

"Oh, all places are much alike to me, I think," she said rather wearily. "I like this because I am used to it."

The big, dark-bearded man beside her glanced at her, and saw her eyes looking straight forward, as though to avoid meeting his, while the wistful droop of her mouth had become more marked. The sight touched him keenly; he would have given the world to take her in his arms and comfort her, but he controlled himself, and went on talking in his previous deliberate gentle way. "You have changed a good deal since I went away."

"Have I?" she answered indifferently. "I am older, I suppose,—and wiser," she added rather bitterly after a trifling pause.

"You have changed," he repeated, "and I don't know whether age or wisdom is accountable for it. I am not a good hand at Scripture, but I think I have heard a quotation about *he who increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.*"

"It's in Ecclesiastes, I think," she remarked rather hastily.

"You are much more beautiful than you were when I went away," he continued, and now, in spite of his care, she caught a thrill of passion in his voice. "You are more beautiful than I ever thought you would be. But all the same I do not think you are happy, Phæbe. I do not want to ask you

any questions; I have no right to pry into your affairs, and I am not likely to flatter myself that I am the kind of confidant to attract you. But I see things more keenly for my absence, and I am sure of what I say." There was no answer. Perhaps he hardly expected one, for he spoke again almost immediately. "You need change and variety and more interest in your life, something to amuse and occupy you. You should not be always here with nothing to do but humour my uncle and listen to his music. You want some one to be with you. How would you like a lady-companion?"

"I don't think I should like it at all," she replied in a very decided tone; "unless I could choose her myself."

"Why not?" asked Anthony. "You're the person most concerned. Why not choose her? Only——"

"What?"

"She must not be too young, you know," he said diffidently; "old enough to act as chaperon if you went from home, for instance. You see, Phæbe, one cannot ignore the fact of your being a very pretty, young woman, nor yet the fact of myself and Mason being men. There must be no gossip about us in the neighbourhood."

He saw the bright colour mount in her cheek as she spoke. "Very well; get some one to be with me. Or better still," she said, with more interest than she had yet shown, "send me away, Anthony. Ah, do let me go away!"

"But I thought you said you liked this place because you were used to it. Of course I dare say we could easily find some lady who would receive you into her house, if you find this one distasteful. There is no reason why you should be hampered. Only of course my uncle would miss you."

He had not reckoned in vain upon her unselfishness; not having the least intention of allowing her to go far from his own influence. "How selfish of

me!" she cried. "For a moment I forgot poor Uncle Dennis. No, Anthony, you must get a companion. Only do let it be some one I can get on with."

"We'll have a succession down on trial," he said laughing. "You shall test them for a month, and then if the candidate does not suit, we can get rid of her. The matter is not a very difficult one."

"You are very kind," she said, beginning to be a little disarmed by his simple friendliness.

"Only you don't quite trust me yet, eh?" he said smiling. "Well, perhaps some day, Phœbe, you may find I am not so black as I'm painted,—or rather as you've painted me." And as she passed him to re-enter the house, he saw by her startled look how clearly he had hit the truth.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ONE is sometimes compelled to acknowledge with a sigh that the days of romance, as regards its external aspects, are over. The robber does not ride up to your coach upon a lonely heath and, reining in his faithful and splendid steed, demand (in all courtesy, if ladies be present,) the immediate surrender of all your most valuable and portable property. He now waits till your family dinner-hour, and scaling the porch, enters your house by the front-landing window, proceeds to your bedroom, and locking the door inside, begins a systematic and intelligent selection of such articles of value as suit his fancy. Then he makes an ignominiously quiet exit, and disappears without any polite removal of a plumed hat as a farewell. He has so far departed from the spirit of his predecessors in the profession that he does not, as a rule, share his winnings with the poor. In short, like every one else, he has become

infected with the commercial spirit of the age, and works entirely with a view to acquiring as much as he can get for himself. The whole business is matter of fact to a degree.

In the same way the abduction of unwilling maidens and their forced acceptance of unwelcome suitors, has assumed the same deplorably common-sense complexion. In former days the lady's papa, or lover, incarcerated her in either a tower or a dungeon (usually in the company of spiders and other forms of life calculated to act upon the nerves), until she gave way, and was led weeping to the altar. In these days her probation often takes the form of foreign travel, with (if the guardians be wise) no reviling of the ineligible and preferred lover, but merely a constant reiteration of the unwelcome suitor's advantages. In nine cases out of ten this plan succeeds; and on the whole it is perhaps preferable to the dungeon-cure, which, however, possessed the advantage of being far less expensive. No lover, however ardent and disliked, would now venture to put personal restraint upon the young lady, and assuredly our friend Mr. Anthony Holson was the last person to try so clumsy a method. He meant to marry Phœbe, and to do him justice he seldom broke his word or missed his aim. Moreover the remembrance of a certain foiled plan of vengeance only whetted his ardour for success in his dearest project. He intended to marry Phœbe, but he did not intend to drag his bride to her fate; he meant to have her consent; and some small meed of praise is due to him for the patience and self-restraint he imposed upon himself during his wooing.

The lady-companions forwarded their credentials by hundreds, in answer to an advertisement in which two bachelors wished for a companion

for their cousin; but none seemed quite to meet the special requirements of the case, and after about a month's perpetual correspondence on the subject Anthony and Mason altered the wording of their desires, and advertised simply for a companion for a young lady of twenty. There were not nearly so many answers, but they were from ladies of maturer years, and one or two were had down for Phœbe's approval. Miss Taylor came first, whose strong point was understood to be cheerfulness. Her stock of riddles and witty anecdotes was positively endless: she insisted upon the purchase of battle-dores and shuttle-cocks that she and Phœbe might get some exercise upon wet days; and she sang perpetually all over the house with a voice which was none of the sweetest. In a fortnight, at Phœbe's request, Mason exercised his urbane conversational style in informing the lady that she was at liberty to return to town. She was succeeded by Miss Fanshawe, who was strongly recommended upon the score of general utility; but when she proceeded to exhibit that quality by descending early in the morning to dust Mason's writing-table and set his papers in order, her fate was sealed. A third candidate in the shape of a widow lady of fifty, named Mrs. Crumb, proved more successful, and she was for the time being installed as an inmate of the Denehurst establishment.

Mrs. Crumb was stout, and moved about with so much creaking and such hasty respiration, that extended exercise was as repugnant to herself as to any one else who happened to be with her. She had a round pink face, with slow sleepy blue eyes, smooth gray hair, and plump hands. She was not a person of acute perceptions, but this, if it prevented her sympathy from being very ready, at any rate

hindered her from that violent trampling upon cherished convictions which is sometimes so trying in the quick-witted. She did not sing; she never expressed the least desire for battle-dore and shuttle-cock, and she never went inside the library door; accordingly Anthony and Mason, with Phœbe's approval, installed her as companion. She was kind to the girl after her fashion, and though Phœbe would as soon have confided in a fat and amiable cat, still the sense of kindness remained, and she felt grateful. Old Dennis Dene too was pleased, for Mrs. Crumb, who was not at all musical, never seemed shocked by his occasional discords, but placidly listened to his violin so long as he chose to play, and only looked up from her interminable knitting to cheerfully praise his performance when it concluded.

There was no doubt that Anthony's return had brought a fresh interest into Phœbe's life; he had quickened its rather stagnant and lingering current with a blast of new ideas and impressions. Although she was as far as ever from even imagining him her suitor, yet he was more acceptable to her than he had ever been. Hers was a very true and loyal nature, and none the less so that it was free from the morbid sentiments which sometimes shorten young lives under similar conditions. There was not a day, scarcely an hour, when the thought of her brief dream of happiness did not occur to her, and her faithfulness to her dead lover never wavered. But the first terrible smart of her wound was healed; lifelong as it was, it was not mortal. She was convinced of Hugh's death, but her grief was that which mourns above a grave when the grass is green and the birds sing, not the hot-eyed anguish that hangs over an open coffin. He was dead, but he had died faithful;

and she was glad, ah! how glad, that the secret of their love was still between those two alone, the living and the dead.

One evening, when old Dennis Dene had gone to bed and Mason to write, Phœbe and Anthony sat playing chess in the dining-room. The late autumn evenings were chilly and there was a good fire on the great hearth, on one side of which Mrs. Crumb was dozing peacefully in an armchair. It was Phœbe's move,—a critical one, for she was threatened with mate in two moves if she were betrayed into any unwariness. She sat staring at the board for some time, so thoroughly absorbed in her position that she did not notice that her cousin was looking at her. When he suddenly spoke, the change in his voice thrilled her with surprise and pain.

"Phœbe," he said, in a very low voice, "do you know why I went away five years ago?"

"Probably because you wanted a change," she said uneasily.

"I wanted no change: I was too content to stay; but I dared not stay."

"It is your move, Anthony," she said, trying to recall him to the game.

He looked round. A placid snore from Mrs. Crumb showed that she was incapable of playing eaves-dropper. "Yes, it is my move, Phœbe," he said, more in his usual voice. "We are playing a game, you and I, and I wonder which of us will win. You were not much more than a child when I left, but I think from the very beginning you had been my ideal of beauty and worth. I saw that my uncouth, passionate ways frightened and repelled you; I was afraid you might begin to hate me; so I went to nurse my hope till I might dare to show it. I have not seen a woman's

face since I left, but your face has come between. I could have won many, but I did not care for that which was within such easy reach. I waited and waited, and hoped. I toiled to get money that one day I might give it to you. You know the end of my toil. I have sometimes wondered, Phœbe, how you remembered me, when you were told that I lay buried at Saint Florel. Did you ever spare me a kindly thought? You need not have grudged it to me then."

He paused for a moment, and Phœbe with that sweet charity which springs eternal in the gentle breasts of such as herself, remembered now, with a pang of compunction, that her chief feeling on hearing the news of his death had been one of relief. She was conscious of an almost guilty sensation, when he went on again.

"I don't want to pretend, even to you, who I should wish to think the best of me, that I was a particular saint through all those five years. I touched pitch, not once but many times, and was defiled accordingly; but whenever I thrust my temptations aside, Phœbe, it was for your sake; whenever I scrambled out of a slough it was your eyes that drew me. I drank and gamed,—I went in for any and every kind of excitement that might cure me of my hope or rid me for a while of your memory; but it was of no use. I should not have come back now, but for you. And even now,—what is there for me to expect?"

She was about to speak, to tell him once and for all that his appeals were as hopeless as his love, to bid him trouble her no more; but he stopped her.

"Say nothing now, Phœbe," he pleaded. "You cannot refuse what I have never asked for. Do not speak in haste. I have told you only the

plain truth. I have no gift of speech to convey my meaning in pretty words such as women like, and some men can use. I will take no answer now; I will put no question; but I will ask you, Phœbe, if you can, to fancy what I have gone through; to try and picture to yourself my cravings and torture all these five years. If you do that, and if your imagination leads you anywhere near the truth,—you will at any rate be sorry for me."

He rose, and without another word left the room, closing the door with a sound that startled Mrs. Crumb into wakefulness. She rubbed her eyes and hurriedly consulted her watch. "Good gracious, Phœbe!—just eleven! I must have fallen asleep. Come, child, we will go to bed at once; what will become of your beauty-sleep I wonder! That's the worst of chess; it goes to such a fearful length sometimes. How did you get on with your play? Which of you won?"

Phœbe struck a match to light her candle before she replied slowly and thoughtfully more to herself than to Mrs. Crumb: "It will be a drawn game, I think."

It was perhaps significant that she did not suggest her own victory, and that she spoke in the future tense.

The next day, much to her relief, Anthony met her without the slightest deviation from his usual manner, though he told her, when he bid her good-morning, that she was looking pale.

"I don't know why I should look pale," she said, with a touch of irritation. "I am all right. One can't always look like a dairy-maid."

To tell the truth, the beauty-sleep to which Mrs. Crumb had alluded, had not visited her eyelids at all. She had lain long awake, pondering uneasily over the state of affairs which Anthony's sudden outburst had revealed, and in spite of herself, feel-

ing that he was the stronger. Would he insist in pressing his horrible realities upon her, till she fairly yielded to his insistence? She did not want to feel sorry for this man; the sensation opened a tiny rift in the armour of repugnance with which she had clothed herself; she wished with all her heart that he had never obliged her to listen to his tale, which she could not help knowing was true. Why did he persist in his infatuation for her? Phœbe felt that even if she had been unfortunate enough to fall in love when that sentiment was hopeless, she would at any rate have held her peace about the matter.

For a day or two she avoided him, and he on his part appeared to further her desires in this respect, for she saw little of him. Gradually however the sharp edge of her intolerance wore itself blunter, and, thanks to his admirably natural manner, Anthony very quickly succeeded in once more establishing himself upon his usual footing with his cousin.

One afternoon, when all the leaves had fallen and laid a sodden carpet underfoot, Phœbe came along the shrubbery path. All the colour seemed to have vanished from the face of nature; even the parting rift in the western sky lacked the faintest touch of crimson, and only shone a faded yellow through the twigs. The day was one of those which bring most vividly to the mind the sense of general decay and dreariness; and the prevailing neutral tints which surrounded her threw the girl's beauty into startling prominence. Her cloak was dark, but a rim of crimson silk showed above the edge of its fur round her throat, and in her hat the delicate blue of a jay's wing made a spot of colour.

She was returning from a visit to her watercress-merchant, who lay dying, and who had appeared to derive great satisfaction from her consent to

his rather grim request that she would not fail to come and view him when "laid out." She was trying to imagine what possible solace the poor man could derive from this idea when she heard Anthony's voice calling her, and looking round, saw him coming rapidly up one of the wide grassy paths in the small wood adjoining the plantation, and having access to it through a little wicket. She stood still and watched him coming towards her.

His was one of those strong, rather coarsely built figures which show to the best advantage in rough clothes and rustic surroundings. As he walked up the grassy drive in his thick Norfolk jacket and gaiters, with a heavy stick in one hand and his terrier at his heels, Anthony was unconsciously looking his best.

"I've got something for you," he called as he came up, "that is if you care to keep it; if not, we'll hide the little brute away again in some corner. Caesar sniffed it out, and would have killed it if I hadn't happened to see what he was doing."

He put his hand into his breast-pocket, and in another moment a sleeping dormouse lay in Phœbe's palm, while Caesar danced upon his hind legs in a subdued but disapproving manner.

"Why, it's dead, Anthony!" she said. "It's quite cold."

"They're always cold when they're asleep; he'll be lively enough if you take him into a warm room. Do you want him?"

"Oh, yes!" she answered, as they began to walk home together. "I'll keep him certainly."

"Where have you been?" he inquired.

"To see old Stoney, the man who grows watercress. He's dying, and he knows it: he quite gloats over the details of his own funeral; and he

has made me promise to go and see him when he is laid out."

"Indeed you'll do no such thing," said Holson angrily. "What business have you going to see corpses and that kind of horrors? You shouldn't know anything about all the grim realities of those things."

"Why not?" she asked simply. "He was so pleased when I promised I would come."

"Now what possible pleasure can he feel at the prospect," said Anthony, "seeing that if the usually accepted theory of things is to be relied on, he will not know anything about it? There is nothing I enjoy more than seeing you and being with you in the flesh; but if I were dead, I think, if my previous opinion were taken, that I should prefer you to keep away." She did not answer, and they went on for a minute or two in silence. "This place is looking very mouldy and rotten; don't you think so?" he said.

"It is always like this in the autumn," answered Phœbe.

"I don't think it is particularly healthy; what do you say to a change, to Brighton, for instance?"

A quick look of pleasure came over her face. "But, Anthony, won't it be very expensive? Mason was always preaching economy when you were away. He seemed to grudge every penny."

"Mason did it for me, I believe," said Anthony. "He seems to have been the one person who flattered me by persistently hoping for my return, and providing a little ready money for the fatted calf. I feel like the prodigal son without a welcome; and though possibly that may be my own fault, it isn't any more enjoyable on that account. Shall the fatted calf take the form of Brighton, Phœbe? If I in my humble way can give you any pleasure,—I mean if you will

condescend to accept any pleasure from me"—he altered his phrase as she showed signs of impatience—"I shall be the grateful one. It is not pleasant to be ostracised."

"I am not ostracising you," she said, her cheeks growing pinker.

"It is true you occasionally speak to me," he said bitterly. "You fling me a few words, as one flings a bone to a dog; but if the bone is bare and the dog is hungry he doesn't get much advantage from the gift. What have I done that you should avoid me and suspect me?" She did not answer. "I suppose it is because I dared the other night to tell you a little truth about myself. Women have fine organisations, and the truth sometimes sounds too strong for them, and so—"

"Anthony," she broke in, "all this is very painful and cannot lead to anything. Why will you persist in talking about a subject that you know I want to avoid? Why can't you leave me alone? You are very selfish."

"Selfish!" he echoed, stopping short just in her path and forcing her to stand still. "Selfish! For seven or eight years a man sets one thought above all others till it grows beyond his own power, it gets too strong for him. Then, when he ventures to hint at what he is feeling, he is selfish! If for one moment I conceived the possibility of my never winning you, I should shoot myself. But I do not acknowledge

such a possibility. Answer me one thing, Phœbe," he said sternly; "is there any living man between us?"

His vehemence had frightened her; she was beginning to guess at the awful reserve of his strength that she had to fight against, and now his sternness compelled an answer.

"Is there any living man between us?" he repeated.

"No," answered the girl.

"Then I swear I will have my way," he said almost fiercely. "My God, to think what power a woman has to torture a man till the whole current of his life changes for a whim or a fancy of hers! To think that I should stand now begging for a word from you, and think myself a lucky dog if I get it! You ought to know—"

Here Phœbe, though in the main a sensible girl, could no longer control herself and gave a great sob, due partly to fear and partly to excitement, for Anthony's presence was like that of a thunderstorm; its electricity permeated the neighbourhood. The tears had their effect; they checked him at once.

"There, Phœbe," he said quietly; "I've been a brute and made you cry. I'm more than sorry," taking a step towards her from which she shrank back. "No, I'm not going to kiss you, or touch you even. Don't be afraid; dry your eyes and get home. I'll follow at a little distance; I dare say you would prefer it," he added grimly.

(To be continued.)

THE CAPITAL OF PARIS.

THE streets of Paris, says Balzac, have their good and bad characters. They are respectable, dishevelled, or even murderous, according as tradition and habit have shaped them, nor are they more adroit than men at concealing their physiognomy. There are certain quarters, even, which preserve a level and harmonious demeanour, which conceal from the eye of the casual wayfarer their subtler beauties and less flagrant infirmities. Whichever faubourg attract you, Saint Germain or Saint Denis, you may wander from end to end without an impression of discord or surprise. You know what spectacle is prepared for you, whether it be of grandeur or disorder, and you may penetrate the remotest alleys without revising an established judgment. But who shall characterise Montmartre, which shifts and changes as the streets mount or descend the hill, which at this corner hides a villa in a wealth of trees, and at that obtrudes a sudden vision of squalor? Here a fragment of the Middle Ages jostles the corner of a provincial town; there the hotel of a dowager frowns upon the turbulent resort of long-haired painters and starveling poets. Town and country are mixed inextricably, and naught save the commonplace could surprise you in this paradise of the unforeseen.

In truth it is the multiplicity, not the lack, of qualities which perplexes the traveller. It is impossible to combine the Place de Tertre (for instance) and the Place Pigalle in a single purview. The one is the true symbol of tranquillity and age; the

other is as restless and as modern as sparkling cafés and well-dressed idlers can make it. When you scale the topmost height, the unkempt fields and broken palings instantly suggest a distant suburb; the scattered windmills carry off your fancy to a secluded countryside; while the church of Saint Denis, seen through the twilight, recalls the glory of crowned monarchs and of ancient France. And when you sit at dinner upon the lower slopes, you might be in the heart of Paris, of Paris brutalised perhaps and less elegant than is her wont, but still enchanting. Even in the churches of Montmartre there is a certain perversity. The Gothic building which remains the temple of the parish crouches modestly in an unsuspected corner, while at its very door there looms the vast basilica, the Republic's one expression of homage to the Church; the basilica which resumes the skill and gravity of the dark ages, and whose growth has brought into the city a thousand pilgrims, with their candles, images, and well-stocked booths. Montmartre, says an enthusiast, is the capital of Paris, and surely in a sense it is the dominant quarter. For the Church of the Sacred Heart is ever visible, gazing with watchful eye upon the city's manifold frivolity.

The Boulevard Rochechouart remains at once the type and thoroughfare of Montmartre. Its wide spaces and gaunt spare trees give it that sinister complexion which it shares with the other outskirts. And when the hours grow small into the night, and the scattered gas-lamps are its

fitful illumination, then it becomes the proper background of murder and ambushade. The lengthening shadows fill the wayfarer with fears of surprise and of the sudden knife, nor does the wise man linger too long in this land of lawlessness. But when the shops and music-halls are still brilliant with a thousand lights, the Boulevard Rochechouart reveals its proper character. It shines forth a Parisian Edgware Road, if so gross a contradiction be imaginable, gay and irresponsible; for it is a true haunt of night birds, and the autumn fair is the moment of its greatest glory. Then the lion-tamers and dancers drag their booths into the street; and the hissing gas-jets throw a glare upon the shooting alleys; and the merry-go-rounds revolve to their jingling tunes; and the lank switch-back stretches its length between the trees. In the daytime you can hardly look at it without a shock of disgust; as though in the gray of the dawn you gazed through the fumes of smoke upon a room which only candle-light made tolerable. But its nocturnal function is to amuse; despite its sombre mystery, despite the prevailing sensation of terror, Montmartre is noisy with laughter, and Rabelaisian in its expression of intelligent mirth. In every café is a comedian, in every street some haunt of the dishevelled Muse. On all sides the voice of gaiety is heard, raucous with beer and the determination to affright as well as to divert. A poet may preside at your dinner, or a painter insist that your drink be served with a proper dignity, and since wit is the rare attribute of an inn-keeper, there is little better entertainment than a visit to these northern heights. One only necessity is inexorable; you must clothe yourself in the triple brass of good temper; you must prepare to encounter the

intimacy of strangers, and to endure the insult which is bred of instant familiarity. Thus equipped you may wonder at many a strange talent, and carry away a unique, abiding memory of austere merriment.

A faint light glimmers through the trees, and you find yourself at the Sign of the Pipe. The drawn shutters and the bolted door prove that entrance is a privilege, and the proprietor inspects you through a wicket before he decides upon admission. Within, the hall is narrow and confined; the packed audience greets you with a ribald song; the waiter, who is harried to imbecility by the perpetual cries of "Maxime," "Maxime," and who finds all things easy save the giving of change, flings a glass of beer before you, and you are free of the house. The decoration is simple to severity; only over the door hangs an ominous chair, wherewith, says tradition, a former proprietor killed a recalcitrant waiter, and has ever since remained for a warning to the insubordinate. But it is Aristide Bruant, the landlord of this strange tavern, who fastens your attention. A heavy man, large-featured and shock-headed, he shambles to and fro with buoyant step, as though poised upon his toes. Everything about him is big, his voice, his manner, his hands. Within the walls of his tavern he is a complete tyrant; he excludes whom he will, and exacts the tribute of a kiss from every woman who crosses the threshold. But he does it all with so blatant an effrontery, with so ironic a smile, that only the churl resents his insolence, and it is easy for those who like not the habit of the place to remain without. His costume is suitable and original, or it was original until it was aped by the imbecility of his pupils. Top-boots, a red shirt, and black velvet breeches; these are his equipment, and though

on another man they might suggest a social revolution, they are appropriate to him and to his talent. However crowded his tavern, an alley is kept always free for him, and to and fro he rolls with the nimble gait of an amiable bear, smiling upon his clients and singing his famous songs. A true rhapsodist he writes his own verses, and makes his own music, and no sooner does the accompanying piano cease, than the chink is heard of the money-box which shall gather his legitimate reward. Yet this tavern-keeper has talent, one may even say genius, he is the crowned laureate of the quarter, and his book *DANS LA RUE* is like to become a classic. Written in the indecipherable jargon of the street, the work is outspoken to brutality, but it is frank without sentiment and honest without reproach. Its personages are dangerous enough; they are those indeed whom you may see lurking at night under the lean trees of the outer boulevards, the poor, the infamous, the disinherited; but Bruant handles his tragedy with so direct a purpose, that it rises now and again to the sublime, and to hear his verses gruffed out by himself is an experience for which you would endure much spilled beer and many ribaldries. If he be in good humour, he will sing the evening long, or he will mount the table and recite you the sorrows of the pencil-peddler. And it is all done without the tedious pose of a set performance, or the false pomposity of a theatre. For instance, he will interrupt his masterpiece, *AT SAINT LAZARE*, with an insult hurled at a refractory guest, and then resume his song in the same stern fashion as before. Nor are the unexpected effects the least admirable. Once upon a time a portly citizen from the provinces discovered, at the inspiration of the piano, a sudden talent for the

dance. A few steps he executed in a corner for himself and his friends, but Bruant instantly brought him to the light, cleared a space, encouraged him to the wildest antics, and rewarded his prowess with the best beer the house afforded. Thus the poet condescends to your entertainment; and if he crunches your hand as you depart, if he slams the door upon your heels, does not his talent excuse his hustling discourtesy?

Far more splendid and less characteristic is the Tavern of the Black Cat. Yet this also is a true corner of Montmartre, and no familiarity can cheapen the delicacy of its art. If Bruant be the poet of the quarter, Willette is its painter, and it is Willette who has decorated the Black Cat with its army of grimalkins frolicking upon the familiar roofs and windmills. The superstition of Montmartre was invented or at least perfected by Willette, whose fancy has depicted its landscape and seized its types a hundred times. For him it is the land of Pierrot, who despite his joyousness is ever pursued by a demon of mischance; and Pierrot still triumphs, with more noise, maybe, than becomes so gentle a spirit, upon the stage of the Black Cat. Below, the tavern is an orgy of medievalism; the pots of beer are set upon heavy tables, and vast projecting mantel-pieces interrupt the pictured decoration of the walls; there the world of Montmartre takes its glass beneath the large eye, and in the larger presence of M. Rodolphe Salis. As M. Salis was the first, so he remains the most distinguished landlord of a cultured tavern, for the Black Cat, in spite of its racket and hilarity, is still cultured in a respectable sense. For the landlord dispenses patronage as well as beer. Poets not a few have made their first appearance under his auspices; a school of humour has

grown up in his bar-parlour; his theatre is still the wittiest and most accomplished in Paris. The stage does but occupy a few square feet, yet it is large enough for the sternest emotion or the jauntiest comedy. The actors, like the scenery, are shadows thrown upon a sheet, yet so deftly are they designed, so cunningly are they handled, that they present a far sharper impression of life than the more elaborate and less reasoned gestures of men and women. Here you may see the victorious march of the Grand Army, or the shifting procession which ever unfolds itself under the stars. Or Phryne stands in judgment before the pontiffs of French literature, or Pierrot, turned painter for the nonce, suffers imprisonment from the malice of M. Bérenger the Puritan senator. But the masterpiece is the Prodigal Son, a simple adaptation of the ancient legend set forth with incomparable daintiness and reserve. While no motive could be more obvious, none could be more dramatic, and the images, whether gay or tragic, flit across the sheet in beautiful succession. In truth at the Black Cat you see the essence of the theatre, the theatre freed from the irrelevant and disconcerting. Shadows cannot pretend to create a part, nor can they distort for their own aggrandisement the plain meaning of the author. Here are no middlemen to intercept the understanding; nothing is out of key, because all the details are subordinated to the general plan by the inventor himself. When the silhouettes turn or advance, you grasp at once how large an effect may be produced by a small movement; you understand the imperfection of acting, the one art which attempts to realise what should only be suggested. The theatre of the Black Cat indeed achieves by another road what was long ago perfected at Athens.

The Greeks had so fine a sense of the drama's possibilities, that with masks and pattens they put their actors beyond and above life. M. Salis, by confining his stage within a narrow compass, takes us an equal distance from reality, and thus saves us from the tedium of an obtrusive personality.

Meanwhile all is not silent. The landlord, playing the part of an ancient chorus, pours forth an endless torrent of interpretation. He shifts his patter to the exigence of the moment, and embellishes his odes with appropriate references to the audience and the occasion. Now he will denounce the spectators as the burgesses of the capital, now he will break out into the praise of Montmartre, or of his own Black Cat which he declares is the brain of Paris. Thus all is joyous and improvised, and not even the fashion which after many years has set in the direction of this pigmy theatre has availed to impoverish its dainty art. The masterpieces of Caran d'Ache are as graceful as heretofore, though they are gazed upon by well-dressed citizens and curious tourists. For, while the audience has changed, M. Salis has preserved inviolate the characters of his drama, and his poets are lacking neither in eloquence nor gravity. When the curtain falls upon the silhouettes, they come forward, do the poets, unabashed at their patrons' facile praise, to recite unpublished verses or to repeat for the hundredth time a familiar lyric. True, there is a certain formality in this performance, but it is merely the formality of custom, and you cannot imagine the gifted youths of London declaiming their immortal works in a suburban tavern. For this public display of talent implies an absence of false pride, which is not common on our side the Channel, and it is unlikely that a Rodolphe Salis will arise in

Saint John's Wood to replace the tedium of the theatre by an entertainment at once intelligent and joyous.

Another king upon Montmartre is Maxime Lisbonne, Colonel of the Commune and convict, and withal a tavern-keeper who still preserves the proud title of Citizen. But alas! after many years of kindly advertisement he has resigned his throne, and others less worthy reign in his stead. Disaster chased him from tavern to tavern, and many are the attractions wherewith he has attempted to catch the popular curiosity. Once he held revel in a pretended prison, dressed his waiters as convicts, and ordered that his visitors should win their liberty only by the purchase of a drink. Thereafter he sat, like Daniel, unharmed and complacent in a den of lions, and when the police disliked this simple expedient, he opened the Café des Concierges, wherein insolence and music were pleasantly blended. To enter this haunt of merriment was to be assailed upon all sides by loud-mouthed ribaldry, to be jostled in a corner by the inhabitants of Montmartre who claimed a ready acquaintance. The songs were indifferent, but M. Lisbonne was there to vaunt his patriotism and to declare that his sentiments were noble and virtuous. A portly gentleman, to whom movement is distasteful, he would survey his companion with a smile of contempt, refer with a gracious wave of the hand to the placards upon the wall which set forth his prowess, and oblige on an amiable opportunity with a song. Moreover, that variety be not lacking he would invite the spectators to a raffle, and after five minutes of acute anxiety you might find yourself the embarrassed owner of a fat fowl. But Lisbonne no longer thrusts his hand into his waistcoat with the air of a patron; no longer

does he smile the smile of contempt upon those who frequent the Café des Concierges; and that turbulent corner of the Rue Pigalle deserves to be handed over to the middle-class which it affects most heartily to despise.

For in M. Lisbonne's place there has arisen one Alexandre, who apes his master Aristide Bruant in all save that master's talent, who mistakes insult for genius, and is so little refined in his method, that he has inscribed upon his door, *All my clients are pigs*. And perhaps those who pay a second visit deserve the reproach, and you would pass over this degradation of Montmartre in silence, were it not the inevitable sign of mimicry and a declining art. When M. Bruant is brusque, you pardon the extravagance for his talents' sake; but when his pupils think to win celebrity by the mimicry of his indiscretion, you resent the impertinence as keenly as you deplore the lack of humour. And M. Alexandre is not the only sinner; where dulness is supreme, insolence and altercation become a tradition, so that even Montmartre may ere long be whelmed in ruin and stupidity.

Upon this strange hill, which looks down upon the city, there has always been a suggestion of the macabre. At the infamous Moulin de la Galette, which M. Salis once described as the soul of Paris, the dance has too often been a dance of death. There are vague rumours of blows given in the early morning to the curious intruder, and justice more than once has failed to put her hand upon the proper criminal. You are not therefore surprised to be confronted on the boulevard with a veritable Tavern of Death. The gray and black of the portal foreshadow the gloom of the interior, and it is with an expectant shudder that you take your seat upon a rush-covered chair at the coffin which

serves for a table. The undertaker, in whose guise a waiter is concealed, announces you for a consumptive in a feigned voice of horror. Upon everything is the false shadow of death, and the lightest heart quails at an imagined terror. The pictures upon the wall represent armies upon the march and such other scenes as are quick with life, and at the turn of an unseen lantern all the figures change to skeletons, and the raucous voice of the undertaker tells you that "to this complexion you must come at last." So you rise from your chair and pass through Gothic walls to a small room within, where stands a coffin erect and forbidding. Some guest, bold with carelessness or wine, takes his place in the box, and changes gradually, under a changing light, until he appears a ghastly skeleton. And the audience shudders and passes through an avenue decorated with the symbols of death until it regains the entrance, whence it is wished good-speed for Père Lachaise by the frowning undertakers. The joke is in bad taste, maybe, but, so solemnly is it carried out that the most callous cannot escape a shudder; the music is as grave as the jest, and though you are glad to feel the air once more upon your face, you cannot deny that the comedy is well played and characteristic.

Thus Montmartre wavers ever between gaiety and the tomb; and the tale of taverns is not yet told. In many a side-street, behind a closed door and a red curtain, you will find unheard-of meeting-places and the temples of chastened merriment. Or you may enter a canvas-covered circus and for sixpence ride a spavined cab-horse under the hissing gas. Complex as is the quarter, persistently as it evades a definition, its prevailing types

are simple and uniform. It belongs half to the artists, half to the working class, and thus wholly to the criminal. For the artist is too indolent, the working man too busy to purge his neighbourhood, and thus Montmartre, which on the surface seems the home of pleasantries, is also the home of crime and disaster. The men who grin at the street-corner, and who dance at the Moulin de la Galette, are recognised at a glance. The high bonnet which covers their head, the peg-top trouser, are the insignia of an ignoble profession, old as men and women, ineradicable as disease. And the girls, with the bands of hair which conceal their ears, have a beauty and attraction of their own. Their feet are small enough to deserve display, and it is their keenest joy to advertise their manifold frills in the quadrille. They can all dance, both men and girls; they all wax eloquent in slang; they all know that cunning which is revealed only to the child of the city and the nursling of the street. The girl's fidelity is repaid by the cruelty and avarice of the man, whose underhung jaw and beetled brow are the outward expression of ill-temper and dishonesty. Aristide Bruant has made these personages the material of his tragedy, and you would rather encounter them in the songs of the popular musician than in an unfrequented street; for the men, driving the women to decoy, carry knives at their hips and scruple not to draw them under the starveling trees. This is the duplicity of Montmartre: in one aspect it is the home of exotic gaiety, where the mill of pleasure is always turning, turning; in another, it is halfway to La Roquette, where the pitiless Widow stands ready at the last to reap the offender's head.

CHRISTMAS AT BYLAND.

It was pitiable to see how the monks of Byland yawned that night as they sat in their fine old refectory. They had a dainty supper before them, every dish was a marvel in its way, for their cook was one whom kings swore by, and men would travel many a long mile for a single glass of their wine. Yet the Brothers glanced askance at the food, passing much of it by untasted; and though they drank draught after draught they did so surlily. "Brother Ninian is losing his cunning," they whispered; "his capons are not what they used to be."

"There's no fault with the capons," growled the Abbot; "it's the sauce we lack. Long faces spoil good eating. Ah, things were different when Wymund was alive! He could make the devil himself laugh, and there's naught like mirth for giving a smack to one's victuals. I would yield up every bauble we have, and gladly too," he went on, pointing to a fine array of silver cups and tankards, "to hear him tell once more how he carried off the Dumfriesmen's wives, by the special order of the Pope, as he said."

The Abbot's neighbours would have smiled if they had heard him; for his baubles were popularly supposed to be dearer to him than his soul; and the oddest stories were told of the way some of them had come into his possession. The monks of Rievaulx used to say, when any specially ruthless deed was done in the district: "There goes more plate to Byland; that man would shrive Beelzebub for a tankard." But then

the jealous always see with jaundiced eyes; and all the world knew that rich barons were more prone to make their peace with heaven at Byland than at Rievaulx.

"You should have joined us in Wymund's day, Brother Francis," the Abbot remarked. "What! you never heard of Bishop Wymund? Have you Guienne folk no ears? Why, he made more raids and killed more Scots than any man in Christendom. A rival bishop, one of the mongrel sort, put out his eyes, or he would never have come to Byland. Ah," and here he heaved a mighty sigh, "time passed quickly when he was with us; at this rate we shall yawn our heads off before Christmas."

Abbot Wilfrid was sore at heart, and he showed it. Nature had been more lavish with virtues than with brains to his community, and he wished it had been otherwise. "It's living with sheep that turns men into wolves," he was wont to say. "There's never a stranger will come within hailing distance this many a moon," he continued, looking around him grimly. "Hark how the wind howls! Brother Francis," he called out sharply, after a pause, "you are counted in Guienne, I hear, a nimble-witted fellow. Zounds, man, can't you think of some device to while away the time till fishing comes round again?"

Brother Francis pondered for a moment, then a keen bright look shot into his eyes, and he began a long tale of what the monks of Clairvaux, —or perhaps it was they of Provins, or of Cluny, he was not sure—had

once done when time hung heavily on their hands. The Abbot listened with undisguised impatience at first ; but he pricked up his ears, however, when he heard that these foreign monks had won for themselves great honour by their enterprise, that the French King had spoken of them as cunning fellows, and that the Pope himself had said, "These men have heads."

"The fame of these Brothers spread far and wide," Brother Francis remarked, in his low soft voice ; "and many strangers of distinction became their guests, to their own edification and the profit of their hosts." The Abbot's eyes glittered. "The neighbouring communities quite lost their wits, so great was their envy ; and one Prior, I have heard say, took straight to his bed and died through sheer despute."

"Enough, enough," cried Abbot Wilfrid, chuckling with delight. "The thing shall be done, though it cost me every penny I have. Why, man, I would give my little fingers, ay, and my little toes too, to drive that fellow at Rievaulx to his bed."

The next day all was hurry and excitement in the Abbey ; the monks had scant time for eating and sleeping, and none at all for yawning.

On the first of December in that year, two Brothers set out from Byland bearing with them some two hundred missives, in which Abbot Wilfrid, with much courteous phrasing, prayed those to whom they were addressed to repair to his humble dwelling on Christmas Day. There a modest repast would await them, and perchance some further entertainment. "We purpose [the Abbot wrote in the Latin tongue, for he was a learned man] to present for the glory of God and His Saints, the furtherance of religion, and the edification of you, our well-loved friends, the Feast of

Asses, a sacred pageant of great renown in foreign lands."

The Brothers wended their way across the moors to Rievaulx, where the Abbot sniffed scornfully when he heard their errand. "Feast of Asses, forsooth !" he cried. "Have ye not asses enough at Byland already, that ye go forth to the highways and hedges to gather in more ?"

The Monks of Lastingham and Kirkham were more genial. Come to the feast ? Ay, that they would, and right gladly too ; and they thanked the Bylanders kindly for inviting them. At Kirby Moorside, too, the envoys met with a warm welcome, for the Stutevilles were friends of their Abbot ; and so were the de Roosees of Helmsley, and the Mowbrays of Gilling Castle. They all swore they would betake themselves to Byland on the appointed day, if the snow were not too deep. The Bishop of Durham chanced to be at Crayke when the Brothers arrived there, and he promptly vowed that he too would keep his Christmas at Byland that year. He had heard of the Feast of Asses, he said ; he had heard too, though he did not say so, of Brother Ninian's modest repasts, and of old Wymund's golden hippocras. When the Bylanders drew near to Masham they walked very delicately, for its Lord, Simon Scrope, had, as they knew, a grievance against them. His father when dying had summoned the Abbot of Byland to smooth his path for him to Heaven, and the process had cost his heir a goodly strip of land and more silver than any man knew of. They deemed it prudent, therefore, to halt at some distance from the castle, hand their scroll to one of his retainers, and go quickly on their way. They had a bidding for every castle in the district and for every homestead, for Abbot Wilfrid had decided that friends and foes

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alike should be invited. "We are in charity with all men, I trust," he remarked; "at least on Christmas Day." Whether all men were in charity with him was another matter. More than once his messengers, while on their travels, heard it whispered about: "What trick is the old fox up to now with his asses?" None the less the whole countryside was eager to come to his feast.

On Christmas Day the chapel at Byland was crowded. There were great barons and beautiful ladies, a bishop, a prior, three abbots, and more monks, knights, and squires than could be counted. They who were of high degree sat in state on chairs covered with rich carving, while the more lowly were behind them on benches. The serving-men and common folk stood around the doors, where the throng was so great that many ribs were broken. An open space some thirty feet square, which was to serve as a stage, was fenced off between the transepts, just facing the choir; and in the centre of it a great fire was blazing. A wide path, too, was kept clear right up the nave from the west entrance to the choir.

Brother Francis and his company were punctual to the moment. No sooner were the great people in their places than the sound of voices was heard in the distance. Then a little procession of six men in Jewish gabardines, and six dressed as Gentiles, made their way up the nave, chanting as they went a string of strange incoherent ejaculations. Two priests in copes and gorgeous vestments advanced to meet them. These were the *Vocatores*, or masters of the ceremonies. The Gentiles greeted them with a loud cry of, "The Lord is made man."

"The Lord is made man," the *Vocatores* repeated, turning to the Jews. "The Word of God, your

own laws, oh Jews, prove it," they added.

"Prove that we are to govern you," retorted the Jews scornfully. Whereupon the *Vocatores*, with signs of great indignation, declared they would summon potent witnesses who, by their testimony to Christ, would speedily put the unbelieving Jews to confusion. "Moses, you, Moses, the Law-Giver," they called out, and the Jews and Gentiles retired into the shade.

Then the pageant began, and a most gorgeous affair it was. Scores and scores of well-known Biblical characters and other historic personages, clad in quaint picturesque garb, walked one by one slowly up the chapel. Just where the glow from the fire was brightest they paused, each in turn, and bore their testimony some in words, others by gestures, others again by a nod of the head. The *Vocatores* proclaimed the name of each personage as he passed. First came Moses, holding in one hand the Tables of the Law and in the other a rod. His forehead was horned, and he wore an alb and a cope. He bore himself with great dignity, and hurled curses so loud and deep at unbelievers, that not a few of the noble dames trembled as they listened. Moses was followed by Aaron arrayed in full pontificals, with a mitre on his head and jewels enough about him to ransom a king. Then came Jeremiah, heaving great sighs and shaking his head in the most despairing fashion. Evidently he had lost faith in his generation, and would have been well pleased to see it swallowed up to make room for a better. Isaiah was a quiet inoffensive individual, with a red stole across his forehead, who spoke his few sentences haltingly, as if he found the responsibility of his reputation as an orator somewhat trying. Daniel was a handsome lad with large

blue eyes and hair that stood round his head like a halo. He wore a tunic of bright green velvet richly wrought with gold, and he glanced around him with quite a jaunty air. The ladies all vowed he was much too fine a fellow to pass his days in a monastery.

Some brains were puzzled to know why both Daniel and Amos should carry in their hands ears of wheat; and one young squire appealed to Brother Francis for an explanation. "Wheat is a symbol," he was told, in a tone and with a look which effectually put a stop to any further questioning on his part. Brother Francis was a wise man thus to nip unseemly curiosity in the bud; otherwise the appearance of Habakkuk would have called forth quite a flood of questions; questions lead to discussions, and discussions to discomfiture. The ways of this Habakkuk were certainly puzzling; to explain them would put the most ingenious on his mettle. The Abbot frankly avowed he had no idea whatever why the Prophet should fall upon some radishes he carried in a scrip and devour them ravenously; nor was it by any means clear why he should beat the six Gentiles fiercely with long palms, and let the Jews go free. Doubtless these things too were symbols.

When Habakkuk had passed from the stage there was a pause; and from a certain look on the Abbot's face those around him divined that something of unusual interest was at hand; they were right. "Balaam," called out the Vocatores, and Balaam appeared riding on an ass. The ass trotted briskly up the nave, but came to a sudden standstill when near the stage. Something white and mysterious had sprung into its path. Balaam at once assumed a ferocious air, and drove a long spear into the poor beast's flanks most ruthlessly. Whereupon the ass turned round its

head, and, glancing up into its master's face, cried in a plaintive little voice, "Why do you hurt me so?" Then the white-robed figure advanced, fluttering its wings gracefully. He rebuked Balaam sternly for his wicked ways, told him his ass had more sense than he had, and bade him hold no further converse with the heathen Barak. Balaam, overcome with contrition, hid his face in his hands and sobbed aloud; while the angel, with many warning gestures and more flutterings of the wings, vanished into the choir.

This episode was later on the cause of much discussion; for Brother Robert, a Rievaulx monk who was present, professed to have recognised in the angel a certain pestilent fellow who had been turned out of his monastery for nefarious practices. He was mistaken, of course, for, as Dame Stuteville remarked, if the angel were not an angel, at least he was a holy man, one who had either been in Paradise or had had a vision. How could he have managed his wings so beautifully unless he had seen the angels do it? Brother Robert scoffed, too, at the talking ass, and swore he saw quite plainly a child's foot peeping out from under the animal's long trap-pings. But then, as every one knew, he was a lying witness, sent by his Abbot to spy out faults.

When Balaam and his ass were left in possession of the field the Vocatores challenged the former to give a proof of his skill as a prophet. He, nothing loth, settled himself on his ass and promptly unfolded his views as to the future. Balaam was clearly a man of the world, able to adapt himself to his surroundings; for, instead of wasting time on the affairs of Israel, Media, and such outlandish places, he confined himself strictly to what concerned Yorkshire. He began by implying (vaguely, of course, for there

might be southerners among the guests) that London was doomed to wane and yield its place as capital of the kingdom to Eboracum, as he called York. He then passed on to more intimate matters. There was not a personage of distinction present but received his meed of praise, delicately veiled compliments or hints as to the glory that awaited his race. Good things were promised all round, doughty sons, beautiful daughters, health, wealth, and prosperity. The Scropes of Mas-ham were singled out for such a specially brilliant lot, their wisdom and clemency were extolled in such sonorous phrases, that Baron Simon (for he was there, his curiosity having conquered his rage,) hung his head and blushed for the first and last time in his life. The ladies bridled and smiled as they heard of the good days that were coming, and their husbands laughed aloud with delight; the whole company in fact held their heads the higher for Balaam's discourse. The only dark face in the chapel, as the ass and its master rode away, was that of the monk from Rievaulx, who bit his lips with rage and muttered: "That old fox has no sense of decency or shame."

Then there was another procession with the child Samuel, a perfect little cherub, marching at its head, followed by David, arrayed in royal magnificence, with a crown and many precious jewels. Joel, Micah, and Obadiah were all dressed alike, in parti-coloured garments such as jesters wear; why, it would be hard to say, for they were solemn, impressive individuals, who would as soon have thought of flying as of jesting. Jonah was distinguished by his extraordinary baldness, his head being for all the world like a full moon, Ezekiel and Malachi by the length of their beards. With the minor prophets characters from the New Testament were

mingled; Simeon, Zacharias, the husband of Elisabeth, and John the Baptist. When they had gone their way, profane characters began to appear. Virgil came foremost of them all; he was dressed as a fashionable young man, and declaimed with much graceful action a long string of verses which smacked too much of the monastery to be quite to the taste of his audience. Horace was more up to the ways of the world; his discourse was brief and pithy, and was addressed expressly to the ladies. Solomon had been excluded because of the difficulty of providing him with enough wives, and the absurdity of representing him mateless; and in the whole pageant there was only one woman. She was a young and beautiful Sibyl, with a voice, though, that cracked and quavered so oddly that it made one think of a boy in his teens. She was by no means too courteous in her bearing, but scoffed and giped at the Votatoes in the most outrageous fashion, because they had not wit enough to guess the riddles she propounded for their benefit.

As soon as the Sibyl was put to silence a huge cauldron was placed upon the fire. This was the signal for a flutter of excitement among the monks; Brother Francis's sharp eyes became as little balls of live coal, and even the Abbot seemed anxious and disturbed. Nor was it surprising, for the dramatic interlude now to be performed was one which must have taxed to the utmost the skill alike of actors and stage-managers. Modern experts have often cudgelled their brains to discover how the thing was done, for that it was done there is no doubt, the deed being solemnly recorded in the chronicles of no less than seven monasteries. Now one scribe may lie through sheer wantonness, or even two, but not seven.

A cry of "Nebuchadnezzar" ran through the chapel, and as the Babylonian King marched up the nave the company were stricken dumb, spell-bound by his magnificence. Never was seen such a king before or since. His robes were of rich brocade and cloth of gold; he had a crown on his head, strings of precious stones around his neck, sparkling gems on every finger, and even on his sandals. He was surrounded by a guard of armed soldiers, who prostrated themselves before him on the slightest pretext. Following in his wake, though at a distance, were three comely youths with golden hair and smiling faces, the very emblems of innocence and peace. When Nebuchadnezzar's eyes fell upon them, he scowled so ominously that the youths shrank back in fear, as if they fain would have hid themselves from his sight. He, however, made a sign to them to advance. One of the soldiers then held up before them a great image he was carrying, while another blew a loud blast from a trumpet. The guards forthwith threw themselves on the ground and worshipped the idol with rapturous fervour; but the youths stood aloof with indignation and scorn written on their faces. In vain the King exhorted them to prostrate themselves before his image. "*Deo soli digno coli* (God alone is worthy to be worshipped)," they cried in barbarous Latin, but in voices so clear and bell-like that every crevice in the chapel caught up the sound and echoed back, "*Deo soli digno coli.*" Then Nebuchadnezzar fell into a right royal rage, and at his command the soldiers seized the youths, bound them hand and foot, and cast them into the huge cauldron around which great flames were playing. The guests stood aghast, the ladies shrieked, and even the men seemed hardly at their ease.

The flames rose higher and higher: the soldiers who had mounted guard around the cauldron sank to the ground overcome by the heat; but the youths gave no sign, not by so much even as a groan. At length there was the sound of singing, low and sweet as the voices of angels. Nebuchadnezzar sprang towards the cauldron, gazed into it with evident consternation for a moment, and then implored his victims to come forth. This, to the amazement of the audience, they promptly did, unsinged, too, and at once set to work to comfort the King, whose remorse was terrible to witness.

Judas Iscariot was the hero of the next episode, which curiously enough was strongly tinged with the comic, though of a somewhat gruesome kind. He began by declaring with great emphasis: "Of right my place is in the burning hell. I am here but certain times of the year; it is from Christmas to Twelfth Day, and from Easter till Whitsuntide be past, and every festival day of Our Lady. But all other times I lie still in hell, in full burning fire." Then he suddenly changed his tone, and, as if bent on making the best of his days of freedom, indulged in jokes and jests, and even gave proofs of his skill as an acrobat. He was soon on familiar terms with his audience, and raised great shouts of laughter by sly allusions to cultivating the friendship of certain young knights later on, in a place where, "although warm clothing is out of fashion, there is no sneezing." His quirks and pranks, however, were brought abruptly to an end by all the performers—prophets, priests, and sinners—flocking back into the chapel, where they ranged themselves in picturesque groups around the fire, and sang a chant of peace on earth and good-will to men.

Abbot Wilfrid arose and glanced

at his guests. The pageant was ended, and he would fain know whether his humble efforts to divert them had met with their approval. Never was there such a scene in a chapel, such applause, such bandying of compliments and thanks. Stately ladies quite lost their heads in their enthusiasm, and clung around his Reverence to kiss his hand, while the men all swore there had never been a pageant to compare with his in Yorkshire, nay, not in all England.

"Such talents are an honour to our country," cried Lord Neville. "The King shall know that the Monks of Byland can beat his foreign players hollow."

For many a long year after that Christmas Day, a Yorkshireman, who wished to flatter his host, would remark, when commending the special excellency of any dish: "It makes me think of that supper at Byland, after the Feast of Asses." "Nay, nay," his host would reply, with a shake of the head and a smile; "there was never such another cook as Brother Ninian born, and he surpassed himself on that night."

Certainly it was an imperial feast. There were peacocks, mallards, partridges, coney, wood-cocks, geese, capons, teal, and pikes, all in profusion. Then there were special delicacies for the ladies, rare sweetmeats and confections, the secret whereof has long since vanished from the archives of the kitchen. Every dish was cooked and seasoned to perfection; and such was the flavour of the sauces, that Brother Robert growled, as he tasted them, "The Devil has had his hand in here." "If he had," cried Lord Masham, who by chance had overheard the remark, "I only wish he would sometimes lend a finger or two to my cook."

The wine was a thing to dream of, and those who drank it did dream of it, no man being able to decide whether the flavour of the purple grape or the golden was the finer. Nor was it only the vivers that were good; the monks were as men transformed, and played the host as if they were inspired. The duller among them made jokes for the nonce, and told good stories until the very building shook with their guests' laughter. Brother Francis won quite a reputation for himself by his quaint conceits; and the title of his pageant led to much gentle bantering. "Feast of Asses! And who are your asses, Brother Francis?" inquired the guests. "Is it perchance at us you are poking your fun?" And they laughed and shook their heads incredulously, when the Brother, with many blushes, protested that the pageant owed its name to Balaam's ass.

There was never a pause in the chatter until Wymund's hippocras was served round, and then silence fell upon the company; to talk while sipping hippocras would have been rank blasphemy. It was in plain silver vessels, for Abbot Wilfrid, who was a man of nice feeling, had decided that the famous Byland plate must remain in its coffer that day; the sight of those precious tankards, with their wealth of delicate tracery, might awaken unpleasant memories.

The Abbot of Byland was a proud and happy man that night. Nor did his contentment abate one jot when he heard, the next day, that the Abbot of Rievaulx lay at death's door, stricken with apoplexy. He had fallen into a great rage, it seems, while listening to Brother Robert's account of the grand doings at Byland.

THE MOLLY MAGUIRES.¹

THE appearance of "Mr. Jones" in the witness-box during the recent proceedings at Bow Street in connection with a new dynamite plot, introduces us to another of those secret agents to whom not only the Government which employs them, but the general cause of humanity owes so much. Since 1891 this man has been watching the proceedings of a certain society in America known publicly as the Irish Nationalists, but among themselves as the United Irishmen. It would appear to be in the main identical with another society familiar to all of us under the name of the Clan-na-Gael, its object professing to be the complete independence of Ireland under a republican form of Government, a consummation, as it frankly proclaims, to be achieved only by revolution. For six years this brave fellow has been going to and fro among the United Irishmen, who, as is, luckily for mankind, the invariable custom of these patriots, do not seem to have been so united as they supposed. That during every day, every hour indeed of that time, he has been carrying his life in his hand, will be readily understood by all who realise what the identity of this society with the Clan-na-Gael signifies. His experiences will recall to most Englishmen the name of another brave man, Le Carron; but before Le Carron there was another, not less daring and adroit than he, whose name, though familiar enough to Americans, is probably but little,

if at all, remembered in this country, inasmuch as the exploits of the ruffians he unmasked were confined to the United States, and to but a very small corner of them. We allude to James MacParlan, the man who twenty years ago may be said to have destroyed single-handed the infamous brotherhood known as the Molly Maguires. Some account of this society and of the means by which it was brought to justice may be found neither uninteresting nor unprofitable at the present time.

The extreme antipathy exhibited by a large section of the educated class in America towards Irishmen comes as a surprise to most English travellers. It should, however, be noted that the term Irish as used in the United States has in a general way a limited significance, being applied solely to the Roman Catholic lower class which has made itself such a power beyond the Atlantic, and a power unhappily for anything but good. Whatever may be the feelings with which Englishmen regard this element in their own country, there is nothing upon this side even faintly approximating to the contempt and hatred for it so frequently found among educated Americans. And this is all the more surprising as we have for generations been the objects of ceaseless abuse on the part of the Irish, or at least of their spokesmen, while the American flag has not merely been perpetually bespattered with fulsome Hibernian panegyric, but has been brandished in our faces from time to time in a fashion suggestive of the notion that the Irishman, if not sole owner, was at any rate the predominant partner in the concern it

¹ THE MOLLY MAGUIRES, *the origin, growth, and character of the organization*; by F. P. Dewees [a barrister resident and practising in the district throughout the period described]. Philadelphia, 1876.

represented. It is instructive to remember that of the English-speaking races who contributed to the independence of America, the Roman Catholic Irish took by far the most insignificant share, for their serious immigration from the mother country did not begin till long afterwards. It is also significant that the only name of note they contributed to the revolutionary struggle was that of Conway, who led the well-known intrigue against General Washington, and who is remembered upon that account and upon that alone.

If the Catholic Irish, however, took the smallest share in creating the United States, they have taken far the largest in influencing its later political life, and that influence has been wholly and unequivocally bad. The servitude of so large a part of the American press to the Irish vote is not really understood in this country, not for want of frequent explanation, but because local politics in America naturally do not interest Englishmen. When therefore they are told that the inexplicable vapourings against their country which so frequently distinguish the American press are written to please the Irish, they assume in a vague but not illogical fashion that the latter must surely stand well in popular estimation. When, however, the Briton finds himself in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore, he is amazed to hear language used towards the Irish such as he has never heard in London or Liverpool during the most turbulent periods of agrarian crime in Ireland. But when he has been in America a little time he begins to understand, and soon ceases altogether to be surprised; for when it is borne in upon him what use the swarms of American Irish make of their political power, the heated language of his American friends seems no whit too strong.

It is not this alone, however, that

makes the American who has a regard for his country so bitterly hostile to the Irish Catholic. The men of this generation have not forgotten the lesson given to them by the murderous association of the Molly Maguires, that for many years following the civil war held in terror the anthracite coal regions of Pennsylvania. Till then Americans, like many people elsewhere, considered that, if the secret societies of Ireland murdered landlords, agents, or other persons to whom they objected, it was the lamentable but not wholly unmerited result of past or present oppression. Horrible as these crimes were, and even still more horrible as was the widespread sympathy which concealed them, the motive was, at least, conceivable. But Americans were to learn that this section of the Irish people, without a particle of excuse or reason, could not only perpetrate horrors as brutal and exercise a tyranny as grinding as any that Mayo or Clare had known, but in so doing would find a sympathy and tolerance among Americans themselves that was a revelation indeed.

The anthracite coal-region of Pennsylvania was the scene of this unforgettable reign of terror, that began about 1861 and continued with one brief interval till it was shattered by the memorable trials of 1876. The district was perhaps fifty miles through. It was a mountainous country, even then traversed by railroads, and studded with mining towns and villages. It was wild in the sense that the mountains which overlooked the mining or farming settlements were covered with forests; but it was in no sense frontier in character, was close to the great Eastern cities, and surrounded by some of the oldest and most orderly districts in America.

The collieries, as in our own Black Country, belonged to private individuals or to companies, while the

miners were chiefly Europeans, English, Welsh, Germans, and Irish. In the absence of the latter, life would have been as orderly as in the Wear Valley or the Forest of Dean, but a small Irish minority turned it for fifteen years, under the timid handling of the American criminal law, into a veritable hell upon earth.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians was an immense and far-reaching society, which at that time had six thousand lodges in the United States alone; to say nothing of its strength in the British Islands and elsewhere. With its origin we have nothing to do, but its professed objects were charitable, self-denying, and even religious, and its meetings were usually opened with prayer. Against the mass of these lodges nothing worse seems to have been proved than sympathy with crime and pecuniary assistance to criminals. But with the half-dozen or so in the anthracite coal-regions it was a very different matter. They, too, were chartered societies and professed beautiful aims, and they, too, frequently opened their sittings with prayer. At the bare imputation of violence their members exhibited to the outside world the most genuine indignation. A more philanthropic and moral society had never, it seems, existed. Yet when the secrets of the Order in these regions were laid bare before the world, they showed that philanthropic body to have had literally only one object in its existence, namely, assassination and outrage. There are many theories of the significance of the term *Molly Maguire*, but they are of little consequence. Whatever its origin, the name was one that came to be regarded with horror and loathing by every decent person in the United States. We can ourselves well remember how our neighbours in an adjoining State used to thank God that there were no Irishmen in

their country at any rate. Numbers of men, generally those, too, of repute and stainless character, had been struck down, shot, stabbed, or hacked to pieces upon the high roads, before people, in spite of unmistakable evidence, were thoroughly aroused to the fact that this moral and philanthropic Society was the assassin, and that in these regions it existed for no other object. Its leaders could lie with such ready skill, and blasphemous ingenuity, that it seemed to the panic-stricken citizens impossible that such things could really be.

As we have intimated, the troubles began during the civil war, a period which, owing to the fact of so many reputable men being away fighting for their country, left the latter peculiarly at the mercy of these ruffians. It was characteristic of this Hibernian element, which even now makes more noise on the fourth of July than any descendant of Puritan or Cavalier, that they should have selected the moment when their adopted country was struggling for its existence to open their hideous campaign.

In Schuylkill alone, one of the four counties which constituted the anthracite region, fifty-five murders were committed between 1863 and 1866, most of which were traced to the Ancient Order of Hibernians, there known as the *Molly Maguires*. One of the first of these murders was that of a man named Langdon, a foreman, who was found beaten to death with stones. Soon afterwards, twenty-five men with blackened faces, in the right Connaught style, entered the house of a mining engineer and shot him dead at his wife's feet, while about the same time two hundred *Mollies*, with loud boasts that they would control the whole region, visited a colliery with which they had not the remotest concern, beat many of the workmen, flooded the mine, and

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vowed loud-mouthed vengeance should it be opened again without their consent. It must be remembered that these men were receiving high wages, and were living in comfort. There was no distress, no strike or lock-out; they had absolutely no cause whatever for complaint. Their mania for scheming, plotting, and caballing, and their inveterate hostility to social order was the sole cause of the horrors they committed, and it is needless to say that their leaders and their heroes were the greatest ruffians that could be found. Crime followed crime; outrage followed outrage. The authorities in America can occasionally deal with a mob in more prompt and practical fashion than public opinion here admits of; but in the face of individual crime they are very liable to be timid, halting, and ineffective. It is this want of elasticity and promptness that encourages even orderly communities to resort so often to Lynch Law. But in the first period of this reign of terror the civil war was raging, and the Society defied resistance, not by any means with weapons but by perjury in the witness-box and by intimidating juries. It was not long, too, before they developed into banditti as well as assassins, and added robbery to murder, a form of crime from which the home-bred ruffian has been meritoriously free. The immense value the Molly set on his own wretched life was a conspicuous feature throughout the whole of his operations. He rarely attacked his victim except with overwhelming numbers or till, by some careful arrangement, he had made his own escape a practical certainty. No white man in modern days has been so brutally callous of others' lives, none so timid in attack and so careful of his own as the Molly Maguire. In 1865 one ruffian did indeed have the hardihood to attack single-handed a Mr. Pollock

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who was supposed to have a large sum of money with him. He shot him in characteristic fashion, however, from behind a fence and through the curtains of his carriage. Mr. Pollock fortunately was only wounded, and jumping out, seized the robber, threw him down, and grappled with him on the ground. Loss of blood, however, would soon have rendered the combat a very unequal one but for the courageous little son of the wounded man who laid his whip-handle with such effect about the miscreant's head that he was glad to make off so soon as he could. Shortly after this a Mr. Rae, a mining official, was attacked. He was not only a just and upright man, but was renowned for his kindly heart and widespread charities. His carriage, which was supposed at the time to contain a large amount of pay-money, was stopped by a crowd of disguised Mollies. The pay-money was not there, but he delivered up his own purse and watch. The common footpad would have been content: the old highwayman might even have been polite; but these ruffians were not satisfied without blood, and putting a pistol to Mr. Rae's head in mere wantonness they blew his brains out. A day of reckoning was to come for this, but not for a long while. It must not be supposed that no people were arrested or tried for these murders. In the records of the Terror we have an interminable list of Duffys, Donnahues, Slatтеры, Kerrigans, Doyles, Hurleys, and the like, who on various occasions stood at the prisoners' bar. With hundreds of men to draw upon who considered perjury in such a holy cause as entirely praiseworthy, the concoction and swearing of *alibis* in the hands of the Mollies, and of their sharp legal advisers, grew into a science against which the ordinary law had no power.

Wherever the Catholic Irish muster

in force in America there also will for a certainty be found lawyers of their own race and persuasion, who to an ability in criminal law will add real sympathy with the criminal, provided he be an Irishman and a Catholic. It must not, however, be supposed that the sympathy and eloquence of these gentlemen was to be procured for nothing. The Society's defence-fund must in the course of the fifteen years throughout which its operations extended have amounted to a very large sum. But the men were earning high wages, particularly the less culpable and active of them, and one and all were quite willing, or were forced to appear willing, to pay freely for the luxury of making other people's lives intolerable and outraging the laws of the country whose hospitality they professed to glory in. There were also some six thousand other lodges, with a central administration in New York, which opened with prayer and existed only under their charter for brotherly love and charity. Possibly the worst crimes in an active sense these lodges committed was assisting to degrade local politics; but there is no doubt that they contributed money both for the defence and the escape of their brother members in the coal-regions, and what is more significant throughout the whole period of these horrible outrages not one note of disclaimer, except by a portion of one single lodge, was ever uttered.

"Had the lodges or chapters of any other order in the United States," writes Mr. Dewees, "been proven to have used their organisation to commit one-tenth of the crimes that the Ancient Order of Hibernian Societies in Pennsylvania committed, open and instant disavowal would have followed by every other order from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Saint Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico." And yet in this case no note even of

regret was ever publicly heard. It would be superfluous to remark how impossible such an audacious career of crime would have been in Durham or South Wales, while even in Ireland such a reign of terror has never been approached in time of peace. The helplessness of the American public under certain forms of intimidation has never been more strikingly exhibited. By 1869 these ruffians had acquired control of local politics and had secured most of the county offices of trust. It is hardly worth while dwelling on the robberies and misappropriations of public funds that were the natural consequence, except to remark there was no attempt to disguise them. Whether this control of money in some sort checked their lust for blood, or whether it was that the narrow escape of one of their number for the murder of Mr. Rae thoroughly alarmed them, seems uncertain, but for a year or two the lodges remained externally quiet. It is possible they were too much occupied in squabbling over the plunder of the unfortunate tax-payers.

In 1871, however, the Society appeared upon the scene again as assassins, and, as before, they chose for their victims many of the best men in the country. Their methods were the well-known ones so familiar in Ireland. The lodge would meet to hear complaints, and to decide whether the offender was to be killed outright, or only beaten almost to death, or merely have his house burned over his head. The chief offences for which capital punishment was prescribed were regularly formulated. Among these was the refusal of work by a colliery-owner or overseer to a Hibernian of the Ancient Order, and more particularly should the work be given to some other applicant who did not happen to belong to this delightful breed. Another capital offence was taking possession of a house

from which an Irishman had been removed, even if such removal had been due to those ordinary accidents of business to which every tenant of every class is liable in every country. Sometimes formal warnings were sent of the usual familiar kinds, rude scrawls of pistols, coffins, and daggers, emphasised by ill-spelled and ill-written imprecations; but often the unhappy victim knew nothing of these designs till he found himself gasping out his life on the high road riddled with bullets or slashed with knives.

Encouraged by such immunity from punishment the Molly Maguires after a time ceased even to require any definite offence before sanctioning death and appointing executioners through their tribunals. Things came at length to such a pass that a member who cherished a private grudge against some individual could often get a verdict from the Society against him, and thus secure his destruction or maltreatment without any risk to himself. For the agents appointed by a lodge for carrying out its devilish decrees were usually drawn from a centre in some neighbouring county, who in their turn received similar assistance. And it is in connection with this perhaps that the temperament of these people seems so inscrutable to the ordinary Saxon. These instruments of murder were often young men who in the ordinary relations of life were accounted harmless and respectable, possibly even kind-hearted. And yet when they were detailed to shoot or beat to death a man whom they had never seen, or possibly never even heard of, and for a reason of which they were in profound ignorance, they actually seemed to feel that they had been selected for a noble and meritorious action. They conceived a genuine admiration for themselves as potential heroes, and when the horrid deed was done they felt that they actually

were heroes. They strutted and swaggered for months afterwards, and were regarded with respect by the whole Ancient Order of Hibernians in the anthracite region. If the Chief Secretary for Ireland or some unpopular landlord had been the victim, the logic of all this procedure would, by the light of their ethics, have been intelligible; but the men they killed were Americans, whose country had offered them an asylum, and who had done them no injury; nor was there any question of poverty, tyranny, hunger, or the like. By the side of these cowardly, purposeless assassins the Red Indian was a hero; his bloody deeds were gallant and justifiable, and at least courageous exploits. Even the common burglar comes out with something like credit from such a comparison.

By 1874 terror reigned throughout the whole district. The law had proved itself powerless. The great coal-owners and railway magnates felt that if something were not done both the value of real estate and the course of business would be seriously imperilled. It was decided to call in the aid of detectives, and application was made to the now celebrated Pinkerton Agency. The matter was an exceptionally difficult one; no one but an Irish Roman Catholic who thoroughly understood his countrymen could face such a task with any hope of success, and detection, or even suspicion, among such a crew meant almost certain death. The man, however, was happily found in the person of the young Irishman already named, MacParlan. He had not had much experience as a detective, but the head of the Agency had formed a high opinion of his abilities. He was only thirty, but had seen much of the world, having worked at various employments in Ireland, England, and the United States. Even for such a man, an Irishman and a

Catholic, the task proposed was a terribly dangerous one, but he accepted it at once. It was a question of either fame or death, and he had an immense confidence in himself which we shall see was fully justified.

The course marked out for MacParlan was briefly this. He was first to study the different sections of the disturbed regions and then to enroll himself in the Order, remaining in the district till he had thoroughly mastered its entire secrets and woven a web of evidence around the chief authors and instigators of crime from which they could not escape. MacParlan, assuming the name of MacKenna, entered the panic-stricken districts at the beginning of 1874. In six months he was not only high up in the Society, but the most popular member of it in the four counties. With marvellous skill and nerve he maintained his position till February, 1876, when he disappeared to give such evidence three months later as broke, shattered, and dispersed for ever this hideous organisation that for fifteen years had disgraced the civilisation of America. His appearance in the witness-box fell like a thunderbolt among the still confident Ancient Order of Hibernians. Even their counsel were taken aback as in a clear and convincing manner and at great length he told of the ghastly doings of the Mollies, their sentiments, their habits, and their morals. As he told the crowded court-house that the professed aims of the Order were a hideous farce, and that their entire energies were devoted to wanton assassination, to arson, robbery and plunder both public and private, a hundred sullen faces began to blanch within the building and a mighty panic to spread outside through the towns and villages of the district. MacParlan had gone into the district a young-looking man of thirty; he was now but thirty-two, and was almost unrecognisable by his former acquaint-

ances. It was not only that the mental strain of his situation, the continual effort to play a part foreign to his nature and to keep loathsome company that had aged him; the amount of bad whiskey he had been compelled to swallow in the capacity of a popular Molly had caused nearly all his hair and eyebrows to fall off, and so injured his sight that he had to appear in Court in black spectacles. All the six thousand lodges of America, with one solitary exception, had sent money for the defence of the array of scoundrels that MacParlan confronted on this memorable occasion. The best Catholic Irish talent had been engaged for the occasion, and for four days MacParlan stood the fire of their cross-examination with such imperturbable coolness that their case was actually weaker when they had finished than when they began. A prisoner on this occasion had for the first time in the history of the Society dared to incur the awful risk of turning what in England is called Queen's Evidence. This was a supreme moment for MacParlan to come forward with his exhaustive reports, and clinch what in America at that time would have been possibly not accepted as sole evidence. Many of the guilty escaped and were heard of no more; but many were caught and suffered just punishment for their career of crime. The reign of the Molly Maguires was doomed from the moment MacParlan stepped into the witness-box. And it is only fair to say that if the inhabitants of the coal-regions who had been so shamelessly coerced by a small minority for fifteen years drew a deep breath of relief, many respectable young Irishmen who had been cajoled into the ranks of the Society were still more thankful to be once again free.

When MacParlan first joined the Society, for reasons unnecessary to elaborate here, he found it imperative

to assume previous membership in the Ancient Order of Hibernians. For this purpose he had to acquire its secrets by all sorts of hazardous guesses and ventures; and no more suspicious people exist upon the face of the earth than the members of Irish brotherhoods. His tact and skill were wonderful: a slip would have meant a failure of all his plans, and a choice between instant flight or certain death; and indeed he had several narrow escapes before he created the unbounded confidence that made his position more secure.

It is significant that MacParlan, in order to gain popularity among the Order, found it expedient to proclaim himself the author of various crimes and a fugitive more or less from justice, not from England, be it noted, but from other States. He had killed a man in Buffalo, he gave out, and finding how immensely this raised him in the opinion of his fellow countrymen in the coal-regions he was encouraged to declare further that he had made Chicago too hot to hold him by his partiality for passing counterfeit money, or *shoving the queer*, as the cant phrase went. This so enhanced his reputation that as some excuse was needed to account for his being able to live without work, he confided to his new and admiring friends that he had obtained a Government pension by fraud.

In the exposures of 1876 the counsel for the prisoners during cross-examination put to him some ill-advised questions. "Did you not murder a man in Buffalo?" "I never did." "Did you not say that you did?" "Yes, and I also said that I passed counterfeit money and obtained a pension from the United States Government by fraud." "What induced you to tell these lies?" "Because I found they liked a man who could do these things and not be found out. I did it to obtain con-

fidence." The counsel for the defence thought it then prudent to shift into another line of attack.

The story of how MacParlan wormed his way into their confidence, then into popularity, and finally into the inner circle of leadership, is entertaining and instructive. He was a quiet, shrewd, temperate man by habit. And yet for two whole years he boasted, swaggered, strutted, and drank bad whiskey by the gallon. He was finally admitted into the most secret meetings of the Mollies, while no one in the whole Order was so admired by the younger men or more generally trusted by the older scoundrels. For a long time he transmitted written accounts almost daily to a representative of the Pinkerton Agency who had taken a position in the small local police-force for the purpose. These clear and exhaustive reports, written amid deadly peril, are among the records which the famous American detective agency to this day takes most pride in the possession of.

The collateral duties of MacParlan's position still further enhanced the difficulties of his work. His actual engagement was to sift to the bottom the secrets of this murderous association, but his humanity made it necessary also to prevent murder. To act the part of an advanced Molly at their various tribunals, and yet prevent the outrages which were there planned, was a delicate business indeed. He managed these matters, however, with consummate tact. Sometimes, after voting for the proposed crime, he would privately work on the fears of the men who were made specially responsible for it; sometimes he would profess private information that the intended victim was innocent, and that some other man, whom he thought to be pretty safe, was the right object of vengeance. He generally, when other means failed, found means of warning the police, but this, of course, with his

great aim in view, was too dangerous a proceeding to resort to except when absolutely necessary.

A pretty scene was arranged between MacParlan and his confederate in the police, Captain Lindon, to give a finishing touch of confidence in the former's statements as to his past life. Captain Lindon was standing at the bar in one of those drinking-saloons which the Society especially delighted to honour. Presently MacParlan entered and stood near the Captain apparently quite unconscious of his presence.

"Ain't you Jim MacKenna, and didn't you live in Chicago?" said Lindon looking hard at him.

"That's my name," said the man addressed, sulkily; "but I don't know who you are."

"What," said the Captain, "not remember Lindon?"

A burst of recognition then lit up the supposed MacKenna's face and he seized Lindon by the hand, shook it effusively, and called up the crowd to drink in honour of the occasion.

MacKenna presently walked out of the room. "A devil of a fellow that," said Lindon to the men standing round, "the smartest shover of the queer in the whole of Chicago, but a real good fellow. He once shot a man who was threatening my life, and, though I ought to arrest him, my hands are tied by personal obligation."

Perhaps, however, the most wonderful part of MacParlan's performance is the daring way in which he stood to his post for some weeks after suspicion had actually fallen upon him. He considered that the web which it was his business to weave round these assassins was not completed to his entire satisfaction, and he held out for some considerable time after having been actually put under sentence of death, and after news had been received in the Society which left no further room for doubt that he was anything

but a detective. His position seemed desperate, but with consummate acting and nerve he still played his part as a prominent member. He feigned the utmost indignation at what he stigmatised as cruel and unjust suspicions. He loudly and persistently demanded to be put upon his trial, and agitated so energetically for this end that some of his companions against their better judgment were staggered in their belief. But it was thoroughly understood in the Society that this was no case for a trial, and his death was arranged. Such things, however, were not done among the Ancient Order of Hibernians in the heat of passion and upon the spur of the moment. All risk of danger to their own skins had to be provided against, and the preliminary scheming was doubtless both pleasurable and congenial. MacParlan in the meanwhile was treated almost as if nothing had occurred to shake their confidence in him. As we have said he had gained a great ascendancy over members of the Order, and under the spell of his personal fascination one or two of them declared that whether he was a detective or not they would stand by him, the one solitary flash of generosity amid the squalor of the tale. At last Captain Lindon implored him to run such a frightful risk no longer, and one fine morning early in March the Molly Maguires woke up to the fact that Jim MacKenna had vanished from their midst. If there was some alarm felt at first it soon quieted down, and his name as one to be feared seems to have completely passed out of their minds. The confusion, astonishment, and terror with which they saw his reappearance in the witness-box at the great trial in the following summer may thus easily be imagined.

The Roman Church had of course hurled unceasing thunders against the Society. Even if the victims had

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been Irish landlords instead of innocent Americans they would have done this much in all sincerity. No one doubts it. But it is a most significant fact that the first man to warn the Society of MacKenna's real character was an excellent priest who had been conspicuous in his denunciation of their villainies. Nobody doubts the reverend gentleman's sincerity so far as it goes, but the significance lies in that irresistible sympathy with threatened criminals which seems in-born in the Irish nature. Perhaps it would be fairer to say that inexplicable attitude which regards the detective, the witness, and almost any one ranged on the side of the law, as an informer and for the moment less worthy of sympathy than the most infamous criminal. It is a monstrous sentiment, but when indulged in by members of that Church which, above all Churches, pleads justification of even doubtful means for a good end, it becomes more lamentable and illogical than ever.

MacParlan's adventures were not entirely free from romance. He found it necessary for the end he had in view to pay assiduous court to a young woman, the sister of a leading member of the Society. That this young lady encouraged his attentions is quite certain; we will hope it was only her vanity and not her heart that was touched. It was regarded among this remarkable community as a great distinction for a girl of respectable morals and in easy circumstances to be courted by a man who was known

as a murderer, a coiner, and a perjurer for private gain, and above all not to have been found out. When, however, this eligible sweetheart was found to be a person of irreproachable life as well as dauntless courage, but a police detective, we learn that she, who had been the envy of her sex, was overwhelmed with shame and grief. The matter is indeed only worth alluding to as an illustration of the mental attitude maintained towards the rest of the world by a certain class of Irish Americans.

The notion of any one pausing for a moment to consider the ways and means by which these human tigers were destroyed would be inconceivable to any but a Hibernian mind. When an Irishman caught red-handed from murder was placed in danger of his life, a howl of anguish and indignation from every Irish community in the country rent the air. But there is no evidence that the long string of innocent victims foully murdered by the Molly Maguires ever troubled for a moment the conscience of any of the many thousand Irish men or women who contributed by money or sympathy to this hideous cause. Nor is there any evidence that the crowds of unfortunate women and children whose husbands and fathers had been done to death ever extracted one note of pity or one expression of regret from the six thousand lodges of the Ancient Order of Hibernians which preyed, and still prey, upon the political vitality of the United States.

A WINTER'S WALK.

We too were born in Arcadia.

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys and destiny obscure ;
 Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
 The short and simple annals of the poor.

OUR own particular Arcady is of such small acreage that you can go through the length and breadth of it in one afternoon ; but a thousand and one afternoons would not exhaust its interests. Those interests are of many kinds : there is the scenery, wood and hill and a little brawling brook ; there is the wild life of hedge-row and field ; there are the things which antiquarians love, a ruined abbey, a little lonely church ; and, lastly, there is the human interest. The population is indeed scanty, and yet there is, or we fondly think there is, more individuality among our few Arcadians than in a whole urban street ; certainly through their eyes one sees further into the backward of time.

Let us then attempt to gather together some of our recollections of its old folks, putting them into the form of an afternoon's walk ; an imaginary afternoon, indeed, and yet made up of many little scraps, as it were, which are not imaginary at all.

In the field beyond the lane stands old Francis's cottage. The lane is steep ; the limestone rock shows all about it, and the channels which the rain of centuries has worn in it are filled with loose stones. To-day, after a wet night, sparkling little streams are running among them ; and the great hill opposite is patterned with

streams too, but we cannot see them, for the fog is creeping down and blotting out the distance from us. The hedge on each side of the lane is made up of hazel trees, from which only a few torn leaves hang now like the ragged banners over a monument, of ruddy sloe-bushes, and of hawthorns still covered with their yellow leaves. A tall branch of wild-rose has run up as high as the topmost branches of the blackthorn, and we think what a sweet bunch of pink roses must have crowned the hedge here last June. Wordsworth had delighted in such a sight when it was summer too with him.

—Wild-rose tip-toe upon hawthorn
 stocks
 Like a bold girl who plays her agile
 pranks
 At wakes and fairs with wand'ring
 mountebanks,
 When she stands cresting the clown's
 head, and mocks
 The crowd beneath her.

The cottage stands in the field, reached only by a foot-path. Along that foot-path Francis has trudged for more than half a century, his limbs moving slower with the gathering years ; and now he is so bent, he moves so stiffly, that the field seems very long to him. The cottage is whitewashed outside ; within there is no plaster, only more whitewash which does not conceal the unevenness of

the stones and mortar. The fastenings of the door, the wooden handle to pull it to, the latch lifted by a leather thong, are Homeric: "*She went forth on her way from her room, and pulled to the door with the silver handle and drew home the bar with the thong.*" A dresser, almost devoid of crockery, a deal table, a few hard chairs,—that is all the furniture. There are no pictures on the white walls, only an almanack from the village shop which absorbs Francis's weekly bit of money. Seventy years of hard work have brought the old man no more of this world's goods than this house and these few poor things.

He is sitting by the fire when we go in, dressed in a corduroy suit, a linen shirt, home-made as you may see by the uneven work in the collar; around his neck is a coloured cotton kerchief tied into a strange bow by his poor, stiff old hands. Mrs. Francis is slowly busy, polishing the grate. She must once have been pretty, and indeed her faded, weary blue eyes are picturesque still as they gleam at you from a faded, weary face. She can hardly "reach to do anything" she tells you; and Francis, coming in tired from his work, turns his hand to most household duties, and before he goes out in the morning it is he who lights the fire and boils the kettle for her breakfast and his own.

The conversation begins of course with the weather. It is an all-important subject to countrymen with their long walks, their long hours of hedging and ditching and of ploughing across heavy fields. Francis says he thought we'd have falling weather since he saw Noah's Ark in the sky o' Monday; Noah's Ark, let us say parenthetically, being some kind of rain-cloud for which the learned have doubtless some other and perhaps less descriptive name.

Then a leading question is put, and

the conversation slides away to old days at once. The stocks,—can Francis remember them?

Yes, he can tell us the spot on which they stood, in the churchyard where the road goes by, plain for all folk to see; our ancestors did not think this was a world to hide vices in. But their day was over when Francis was a boy, and he had only heard men speak of those who had been in them. Only the hands of the prisoners were confined; no provision was made for their feet, as seems to have been the more usual plan. And the stocks led him to a more thrilling recollection.

"They did hang people in chains in my mother's time," he went on. "There was a man as murdered his wife, poisoned her in a cup of broth. As they took him off to the Assizes, he did laugh and say he'd be up-side of his accusers yet. But he was up-side o' them on the top of a gibbet when they brought 'un back. He was hung up like a sign-board outside a public, my mother did say, and the chains would go *screēāk, screēāk, screēāk*, when there was a bit of wind. The boys used to go out on the green opposite the castle, where the gibbet was, and call to 'un, 'Come home to your dinner, Johnnie Jones.' That was their play, I suppose. But there was a man as they did call Will the Whistler; he wasn't hardly as sharp as he should a' been, and folks got persuading him as there was money hid under the post of the gibbet, and one windy night he went and dug there, and the post did blow down, and then they took up the remains and buried them, I suppose."

Then he goes on to tell us something about ghosts. "They do say,"—so many of his reminiscences begin thus, for your Arcadian will not vouch for more than he has himself seen—"They do say as there was a ghost under the bridge, and folks did not

like passing it o' nights, for one Mr. Vaughan,—his sperrit, however—did come about there a-terrifying of people. There was Passon Davies and some other passons, and they brought their books and their cannles to lay the ghost because he didn't let folks have no rest. They had books as could lay ghosts and books as could raise them, so they do tell me. And they laid 'un, though they'd a hard task to do it, and if he'd a' overcome them, they'd have been there now, sure. Passon Davies, he called out, 'Not so fierce, Mr. Vaughan, not so fierce,' for some of the cannles did go out and some did burn blue and summat. And Mr. Vaughan, he called out too, and he said, 'I was severe as a man, and I'm severe now I'm a sperrit.' Why did he come about that bridge? Mebbe he'd murdered some one there, or done summat. There's no saying what he might a' done." And besides Parson Davies there was a certain Dr. Evans who had books which could raise and lay ghosts. Francis has a story to tell of how a girl once "got reading one of his books as could raise ghosts, unbeknownst to him; and I suppose if she'd read a bit further she'd a' had company in the room before long. But he came in just in time to stop her afore she got to the reading as could raise them." It was curious to hear the awestruck voice in which he said this.

Much of the old man's talk would seem flat enough, no doubt, in the cold malignity of print; and for some, which might bear it, we cannot now find room. But room we must find for one of his ballads. Mrs. Francis once told us that as she sat by the fire feeling very bad with bronchitis, Francis had repeated many of his old songs to her to cheer her up. Enchanting visions of old ballads rose to our mind when we heard of them; but alas! they were disappointing. They were of the middle Georgian era,

and were destitute of all the older ballad-note, "born out of long ago." We will end our recollections of Francis for the present with one of his songs; the Bold Dragon he called it, but the dragon proved to be only a dragoon of King George's after all.

A soldier, a soldier, a valiant man was he,
He courted a lady of very high degree;
Her fortune was so large, it never could be told,
And she loved the soldier because he was so bold.

"My father is a knight, a knight of high renown,
If I should wed a soldier, 'twould bring his honour down,
For your birth and mine, love, it never would agree,
So take it for a warning, bold soldier," said she.

"No warning, no warning, no warning will I take,
I'll either wed or die for my true lover's sake."

The hearing of this news, it made her heart to bleed,
And straightways to the church, and were married with speed.

And when they were married and coming home again
She spied her father coming with seven armed men.

She said, "My dearest dear, both of us shall be slain."

"Fear none of them at all," said the valiant dragon.

"Ride on, ride on, my dear, we ha' no time to prattle;
You see they all are armed, and fixed for the battle!"

Then he drew his broadsword, which made their bones to rattle,
And the lady held the horse while the dragon fought the battle.

"Oh hold thy hand, dear dragon, dear dragon, hold thy hand,
And thou shalt have my daughter and ten thousand pound in land!"

"Fight on," says the lady, "the portion is too small!"

"Oh hold thy hand, dear dragon, thou shalt be heir of all!"

And here we must leave old Francis, a pathetic figure, surely,

sitting by his cinder fire and repeating his ballads of youth and happiness. He is a very mine of information as to the old life of the district, and for our part we could listen to him, as indeed we have listened before now, all a winter's afternoon; but our readers might be less patient, and there are other dwellers in our Arcady.

Retracing our steps down the lane (we believe it is a high road, but the high roads here are like lanes in their beauty and perhaps in their roughness), we come to the new bridge and there we see old Edwards looming large through the damp autumn mist. He has his great hedging-gloves on, and is turning a wild, tangled hedge into a neat but very dull one. We like these old hedging-gloves with their one space for the four fingers and another for the thumb. They have their likeness on a *miserere* of the fourteenth century in Worcester Cathedral; and we please ourselves by thinking that those of to-day are no great improvement on those of five centuries ago, as roughly stitched and as unfinished. Edwards wears a smock (a frock we call it here), another old-fashioned garment, but one which is singularly convenient for wet work, as it is made of a material strong enough and stout enough to resist any rain. But smocks are little worn now; and Mrs. Jones, who used to make them, material and smocking complete, for twelve-and-sixpence, has little demand for her work. We ask after Mrs. Edwards, who was ill, and gone to the homely little workhouse in the valley to be cared for better than old Edwards could care for her in his poor house on the hillside exposed to all the winds that blew. "She died yesterday," he said, and put his head down on the gate and cried.

Some natural tears he shed, but wiped them soon

with a red cotton pocket-handker-

chief. And then (do not think he did not really grieve, for indeed he did in his own fashion), he was telling us how she had been as good-looking a girl as ever stepped when he married her, and not one to go chanting about (chattering, we suppose). "But she was allus one as did complain, you mind, if things didn't go straight. Folks have said as I wasn't good to her, but I was. I never heft my hand on her, though mebbe I'd got the drink sometimes. I knew summat must have happened afore they sent to tell me, for the door fled open twice yesterday, and they did allus say that was a sign of summat." Then he goes off to the bridge by which he is working. Those were awkward corners to it, he thought; a man in drink might smash his ribs against them any day. To the moral that a man should not be in drink, he assents very readily. Ay, soberness, that's the thing; soberness is the main thing.

And now we come to a house which is plain enough outside, built of the colourless gray stone of the district and with a gray stone-tiled roof, but which inside has an individuality all its own from the old furniture, the curious old odds and ends from a vanished world, which it contains. But despite these treasures there is a forsaken look about the place. Mrs. Cole is old and ill; a neighbour comes to look after her once or twice a day, but the rest of the time she is alone. She cannot read; she does not sleep much, she tells us. We wondered what thoughts she had as she sat there, what backward glances into that wonderful past in which she had lived. The life of to-day hardly touched her, and seemed to interest her very little; but, like old Francis, she has many recollections of older times, although they naturally take a more housewifely and domestic form than do his. She had lived in the

days when there were spinning-wheels in every house, and when the weavers' looms were always full of work. She had lived in the days of flints and steels, and remembered how difficult it was for numbed fingers to strike a light on those winter mornings, which seemed to be many degrees colder than those of to-day. Her account of the manufacture of rush-lights took one back to White's Selborne and the chapter on this industry, which, even when he wrote a hundred and twenty years ago, was dying out in his Hampshire; a testimony, surely, to the greater persistence with which old customs have lingered on in this remote Arcady of ours. Another wonderful recollection was of a leather suit of clothes worn by her father and very old-fashioned, as she told us, even in his day; a survival hardly of the fittest, for it was, she said, "mortal cold and stiff" for a day's hedging in wet February.

The time did not seem to be wearisome to her, beyond the weariness of illness; she was very patient and never complained. Other lives we know of spent thus alone, and by choice, not necessity. On the hill-side, in a little white-washed hovel, lived, and may live still, an old man;

The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.

We first met him moving solemnly among the brown fern by his house on a November afternoon, carrying a load of it for bedding for some of those creatures whose companionship was a necessity to him in his lonely life, and for whose comfort he was more careful than for his own. He wore no coat, but over his shoulders was a sack fastened together by a rusty nail. Yes, he had a coat in the house, he said, but he did not trouble to wear it. He had blankets too, a parcel of blankets sent to him by a friend, but he had

not undone them; sacks and such-like coverings did well enough for him. Was not that load of fern heavy? No, not particular heavy, but he was getting old in years. He was eighty-five come next Christmas Day. But why did he live up here all alone? It must be cold and lonely in the winter. No, he liked it; he had always been used to being lonesome, you see. Those whom he liked did not like him, and those who liked him he did not like; thus he summed up his life's romance, a history not singular indeed. As we left he thanked us for our visit. "It's very good of you to come and see carrion like me," he said, using a Shakespearian word. "Shall we send that foolish carrion, Mistress Quickly, to him?" asks Mrs. Ford of Mrs. Page.

The picture of that stooping figure under its load of withered fern, and the shadowed gloom and chill of the little homestead, for which already the sun had set although it was still shining on the opposite hill with a wan autumnal light, was very solemn, very sad. And yet we think the old man was happy in his own way, wanting no alleviation from the outer world, occupied with his own slow toils, thinking his own few thoughts.

But let us leave these sad ones. There is another house by the roadside into which we must look; a very contrast to that of Mrs. Cole with its Jacobean oak furniture and the, what might almost be Jacobean, dust upon it. It is the village shop, and, like most other village shops, its trade has suffered by the grocers' carts from the far-away towns which now penetrate even into this wilderness. But nothing can diminish that cheerfulness which Ann Price, licensed to sell snuff and tobacco, as the board over her door announces, always keeps in stock. Her daughter, known as Poll of the Shop, was married last week to a fair-haired, blue-eyed Arcadian, and

a very pretty village wedding it was, although Davy, the bridegroom, disturbed its solemnity somewhat by searching in every one of his huge pockets with hands covered by gloves with mile-long fingers at the moment when he should have produced the ring, and saying audibly, "I expect I ha' lost 'un!"

Mrs. Price is at home, dressed for the afternoon in a close-fitting black cap, a stuff dress made after the fashion of fifty years ago, and a many-coloured check shawl over her shoulders. Mr. Price, too, has just come in, and although straight from work and stained with the red soil of the district, he looks curiously fresh and neat; indeed, nothing which was not so could find a home here. But he sits on a chair near the door, and glances nervously at his muddy boots, as if the lady of his house might resent their presence on her clean floor, which is freshly marked out with bands of whitening round the edges of those great flagstones of which it is made. The polished dresser, the china tea-service (given to her on her wedding, she tells us,) the gleaming grate, the fire which seems to burn brighter here than anywhere else;—it is a pretty cottage picture.

Strangely enough, though Mr. and Mrs. Price are the happiest couple in the parish and make their fourteen shillings a week go further than any one else can make them go, their conversation always turns, albeit cheerfully, on the general decadence of people and things. To-day the falling-off in the girls of the district (with a little pleasant pride, perhaps, in her own good Polly) is her theme. The subject was introduced by hearing a clatter of horse's hoofs outside, and

by seeing ride by from market (no very surprising sight here) the servant-girl from the neighbouring farm, dressed in all her Sunday finery, roses in her large hat, and a big market-basket on her arm. Girls are that gigglety, Mrs. Price says. At the fair last week, she wouldn't have known the girls from their mistresses, they were that dressed, their hats and all! And then old Price takes up the tale. "Ay, but they don't keep girls like they did use to at the farms. We were counting a many housen round where they have nurrin [none]. And when I was a young chap there were a sight of squires about here, and now look at the place. I don't know what do ail the folks, I'm sure."

But Mrs. Price turns on him severely, mindful, maybe, of those muddy boots. "The gentlefolks won't care to hear about them things," she says, cutting him short in what we hoped was going to be something very interesting on the subject of agricultural depression from a labourer's point of view; and he sinks into silence in his chair by the door.

But now the short gray autumn afternoon is over.

Eve lets down her veil.

The white fog creeps from bush to bush about.

No sound of bird or beast breaks the intense stillness as we cross the high lawns towards home; there is no movement even among the sodden bents above the wet grass. Solitary sheep steal silently up, like ghosts out of the mist, stare dumbly at you, and then stalk away to greater solitudes; and they are the only sign of life. This is Arcady seen at its worst perhaps; and yet even at its worst it has charms for some of us.

SHELLEY AT TREMADOC.

SOUTH-WEST of Snowdon Carnarvonshire runs out into the Irish Sea in a long irregular horn, with a central spine of low moorland hills. Just where this promontory forms a sharp angle with the coast-line on the southern side, lie the compact town and harbour of Portmadoc, whose little trading-fleet carries the slaty bones of Cambria far afield.

The town owes its name not to the mythical hero celebrated by Southey, but to Mr. W. A. Madocks, sometime member of Parliament for Boston, who bought a large estate there in 1792. In those days the huge alluvial plain, the *Traeth Mawr* or Great Sand, through which the crystal Glaslyn flows, was a great sandy estuary, full of mud-flats and salt pools, crowded with sea-fowl, desolate, barren, and unsightly. Mr. Madocks was a man of careful energies; he constructed a sea-wall, or embankment, still to be seen, which saved two thousand acres from the sea; by 1800 this was good corn-land and pasture, and he then undertook a far more magnificent enterprise. Right across the mouth of the estuary, from a rocky and wooded ridge on one side to Portmadoc on the other, he built a huge mole of stone, more than a mile in length. The work was slow and arduous, entailed immense expense, and lagged on year after year.

Overlooking the great estuary on the north, runs for two or three miles a ridge of precipitous crags some five or six hundred feet in height, the bastions of Moel Hebog. Anything more beautiful than these crags cannot well be conceived; they run up at

the top into fantastic pinnacles, often quite inaccessible; at the base are huge scree, overgrown with tangled thickets of stunted oaks, hazels, and mountain-ashes; in more than one place there has been a great fall of stones at no very remote period, and vast Cyclopean blocks, piled one upon another like loaf-sugar, descend to the very edge of the coach-road; up the steep gullies you can worm your way, if you are adventurous and disregard the brambles which grow luxuriantly among the stones, on to the very face of the crag, and look out over the tree-tops across the great estuary, now marked out like a chess-board into fields of green and gold, to the sharp peak of Cynicht and the great grassy sides of Moel Wyn. In one place, where the crags are highest, a little valley runs steeply up into the hills watered by a tumbling brook. On one side is a natural platform, about half-way up the ascent, commanding a wide view of plain and hill and sea, and facing the little village of Harlech on the other side of the bay, whose castle towers can be seen on clear days standing grimly out of the little hamlet that nestles all about them.

On this platform Mr. Madocks, with wonderful insight, built his villa. He planted the slopes with forest trees; he cut a drive down into the high road, and built a lodge at the gate; he laid out a walled garden and an orchard; he set up a mill and a farm; down below on the flat he planned a town named Tremadoc with peculiar care, building houses round a small open piazza through which the coach-

road runs, and adding assembly-rooms and a stucco church of quite unparalleled hideousness. Above the houses the crag rises precipitously, with ledges red with heather; beyond the town he planted a great nursery of forest trees, to rear saplings for his hill-sides, and from his house on its rocky perch he could survey his wide domain. Perhaps one of the most attractive and characteristic features of the view is the series of little rocky knolls, covered with heather and fringed with trees, formerly, no doubt, islands floating in a shallow sea, which rise steeply and in grateful contrast from the broad alluvial plain with its monotonous lines.

In the summer of 1812 Shelley was staying at Lynmouth in Devonshire, very busy with childish projects of revolutionary reform. He had printed a Declaration of Rights and other seditious matter, which he was engaged in disseminating by the novel method of sealing leaflets into bottles and boxes, and dropping them into the sea, that they might emancipate the simple souls of the fisher-folk into whose hands they fell, and fill them with divine discontent.

He went further. He sent Daniel Hill, his servant, to paste up copies of the Declaration in the little town of Barnstaple. These ludicrous proclamations fell into the hands of the town-clerk, who wrote to Lord Sidmouth, then Home Secretary, on the subject. Daniel Hill was arrested and fined £200, or in default condemned to six months' imprisonment. As Shelley could not pay this fine (and he seems to have taken little trouble to raise the money) Daniel Hill went to gaol. It is pathetic that the faithful fellow, sooner than betray Shelley, maintained that these papers had been placed in his hands by a perfect stranger who requested him to affix them in public places, and that he had

acted in the matter out of pure good will. Lord Sidmouth said that the facts did not justify Shelley's arrest, but that a detective (then called a spy) should be sent down to watch him. Shelley thereupon fled, having previously invited William Godwin, one day to be his father-in-law, but whom he had never yet seen, to spend his summer holiday at Lynmouth; but he omitted to apprise Godwin of his change of plans.

Shelley had an ardent admiration for Godwin at this time as a philosophical Radical; he hung on his lips, and derived his ethical nutriment from him. Godwin (who cuts perhaps the meanest figure in the annals of philosophy since Francis Bacon) like a true sophist determined to have full value for what he gave. For years he lived upon the money which he extorted from the unpractical poet; pestering him day and night, showering down reproaches and recriminations if Shelley's promised aid was delayed for a post, and accepting money greedily under conditions which might have deterred even the least delicate of mankind.

Shelley fled to Wales. Godwin started in a boat from Bristol, and meeting with contrary winds, was obliged to put into the coast of Glamorganshire, where he spent the night in a barn. At last he reached Lynmouth, tired, wet, travel-stained, hungry, and impecunious, to find his disciple flown no one knew whither. Godwin was not at a loss; he stayed at Shelley's cottage and bade the landlady charge his account to the absent poet, together with a few particulars that he had left unsettled.

Meanwhile Shelley drifted to Tremadoc. Here he found Tan-yr-allt standing empty. It seems that there were two houses on the estate, one probably a farm-house, the other a villa. Which he took cannot be

precisely ascertained, but it was probably not the house which now goes by the name of Tan-yr-Allt, but a house which stood in the orchard of the present villa, where are still the extensive ruins of a large stone building that looks as if it had never been completed. It seems probable that this was where Shelley lived, and that the house which he occupied was taken down at a later date, and a more extensive villa begun on the same site, but never finished.

Shelley described the house as large enough "for the villa of an Italian Prince," and added in a letter to Hogg, that the additional convenience was that the rent, though large, was not to be paid until he came of age. Shelley was now just over twenty and had been married rather more than a year; besides his wife, his wife's sister, Eliza Westbrook (who spent, according to Hogg, the greater part of her time in brushing her hair), was with him; and a Miss Hitchener, a sort of Platonic friend, who had been a schoolmistress at Hurstpierpoint, and was the daughter of a smuggler who had afterwards kept a public-house, was often of the party.

Shelley flung himself with the utmost eagerness into the philanthropic designs of Mr. Madocks. The great mole was then almost completed, but there was a gap of about a hundred yards which admitted the tide freely, and through which the gathered inland waters used to rush with such violence day after day as to suck away the rubble that was thrown in for a foundation. Mr. Madocks's funds were running low, and he feared that he would have to abandon the design. Shelley, who could not pay his rent or his bills at Lynmouth, at once subscribed £100, and by visiting the neighbouring county gentlemen managed to get together some £3,000

more, which he transmitted to Williams the agent. In October of the same year he hurried up to London, with all his suite, bent on the same purpose. He dined with Godwin at Skinner Street and was reconciled to him; and there in all probability he first saw his daughter Mary, then a girl of fifteen, so soon to be Harriet's rival. Shelley, who in many things was still a mere child, was seduced from the charms of philosophical conversation by the prospect of fireworks at the Newtons'. Mr. Newton was a philosopher, too, of the kind that Shelley loved. He and his family ate nothing but vegetables and drank only distilled water. The five children were required to spend some hours of each forenoon without any clothes on, *nakedising* as Mr. Newton called it, as a return to primitive innocence. To these agreeable orgies Shelley was often admitted. Hogg relates that he called at the house one day, and, mistaking him for Shelley, the five babies came down stairs, just as they were, to greet him. On seeing a stranger, "they uttered a piercing cry, turned round and ran wildly up stairs, screaming aloud. The stairs presented the appearance of a Jacob's ladder with the angels ascending it, except that they moved faster and made more noise than the ordinary representations of the patriarch indicate."

Shelley failed to arouse much enthusiasm for Mr. Madocks in London. The Duke of Norfolk, a family friend, who as a rule took Shelley seriously, declined to assist. Shelley returned to Tremadoc by way of Snowdon, and wrote to his father a letter about the emotions produced by Welsh scenery, in which he also requested further supplies, as his money was running short. His father refused to comply with the demand, adding, with grim humour: "I hope that the mountains in Wales will produce reflections

that you well know would be congenial to my own sentiments as well as those of your mother." Whether it was suggested by this correspondence we know not, but Mr. Dowden refers to this date the elegy addressed by Shelley to Cambria, in which occurs the famous line

I am the friend of the unfriended poor.

At Tan-yr-allt Shelley read deeply in such writers as Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, and Plato, and his wife worked also at Greek. Shelley's aptitude for acquiring languages was very remarkable; he read Greek, Latin, German, French, and Italian with ease, and devoted many hours to study; besides this he was writing a poem called HENRY AND LOUISA, a tale of wars and battles, and ZEINAB AND KATHEMA, a Circassian romance; he was also working hard at QUEEN MAB, which was finished in the following February. When in December, 1812, he sent QUEEN MAB for Godwin's inspection that perspicuous critic replied: "You have what appears to me a false taste in poetry; you love a perpetual sparkle and glittering." Besides this his political and revolutionary activities were not allowed to rust. Bottles were filled with leaflets and thrown into the sea; Mrs. Shelley was required day after day to make fire-balloons of old newspapers, which were sent up from the groves of Tan-yr-allt with valuable political pamphlets attached to them, to carry enlightenment to the sequestered farms of Merionethshire. Shelley was still a vegetarian. "I continue vegetable," he wrote; "Harriet means to be slightly animal [she was expecting a child] until the arrival of spring." The one redeeming thing among all these thin and wild vagaries was Shelley's active benevolence; he visited poor families in every direction, distributing food and money and philosophical consolation. There was a

good deal of distress prevalent in the neighbourhood, and Shelley lost no opportunity of bestowing the scanty money he could extract from his friends upon his necessitous neighbours.

His habits meanwhile were of the most eccentric description. His food consisted mainly of bread and raisins. Bread, steeped in hot water and sprinkled with sugar and nutmeg, which he called panada, he devoured with avidity. Hogg relates, of a period slightly anterior to this, many amusing inconsistencies. A certain dinner at Shelley's lodgings had been a terrible failure; "Never mind," said Mrs. Shelley, "we will have muffins for tea." "Muffins!" said Shelley, in a tone of agony, "they will *butter* them;" but when they arrived, buttered, he devoured them with relish. On another occasion Shelley and Hogg were at a country inn. Hogg ordered bacon. Shelley was plunged in grief and gloom at the thought; but when it arrived, he rose from his place, and plunged a fork into the dish before Hogg. "So this is bacon!" said he. "Well, it is not so bad after all." In a few moments the dish was empty, and Hogg had eaten little. Another and another dish was produced, till the bacon was exhausted, and they left the house, Shelley gravely scolding the landlady for not being better supplied. Thence they hurried home, and Shelley burst in upon his wife, requiring that bacon should be instantly produced in large quantities.

But these aberrations were only momentary, though it seems certain that Shelley was all the better for a meat diet, and that much of the nervous suffering he endured was partially the result of insufficient nourishment. "Three mutton-chops well-peppered," was Peacock's famous prescription for a fit of the vapours; and

the recipe was found most efficacious. A delicacy of which Shelley was particularly fond was the gummy exudations of pines and larches. He would carry these drops in his pocket, and crunch them as he walked; and round a larch streaming with turpentine he would hover, sipping like a greedy bee.

At Tan-yr-allt he rose early, breakfasted on bread, and tea if it could be obtained, and spent long hours of the morning wandering on the hills. He was light, active, and incapable of fatigue. We may imagine him dressed, as Hogg describes him at Marlow, in thin shoes, light trousers, a long brown coat with lambswool collar and cuffs, no necktie, and his shirt thrown open down the front, leaving his breast bare. On his little round head, covered with curls, he wore no hat, but often returned from his walks with a wreath of traveller's joy, briony, or convolvulus. He took no regular meals, but ate when and where he felt inclined. If we add to this that his voice was singularly shrill and unmusical, like the scream of a peacock; that he was absolutely devoid of the sense of humour, but laughed loudly and hysterically at what was never intended to amuse; that he never answered an invitation, went or not to a party as the fancy took him, and came away whenever it occurred to him to do so, we have a sufficiently unconventional picture.

When he returned from his rambles he read aloud, wrote, or studied. Then came the evening lethargy, when he slept so profoundly as to alarm his companions, sitting in his chair, or even slipping to the ground, with his head exposed to the full blaze of a glowing fire, like a cat. At nine or ten he woke, and these were his genial hours. He would talk, declaim, argue far into the night, showing always the utmost reluctance to go to bed, and

reducing his companions to the extremity of fatigue.

No wonder that such a life produced a series of nervous disorders and distressing sensations. He was often ill, prostrate, suffering from real or imaginary pains and hysterical symptoms. On one occasion he travelled in a coach with an old lady with thick ankles, whom he concluded was suffering from elephantiasis, and imagined that the contagion had infected himself. He was for ever feeling and stroking his skin to see if it was swollen, and used to alarm ladies, at the parties he attended, by turning to them and stroking their necks or arms to see, not if they were sufferers from the disease, but whether the outlines of their forms corresponded with his own. On one occasion at the Newtons' he slipped from his chair on to the ground, groaned aloud and writhed like an eel. "What is the matter, Shelley?" said his host. "I have got elephantiasis," he replied in a hollow tone of dreary conviction. This grotesque fear was at last banished by a classical quotation made by Hogg to the effect that the disease could only be contracted in Arabia.

This leads us to the singular event which was the cause of his leaving Tan-yr-allt, and which has never been satisfactorily explained. On Friday, February 26th, 1813, a night of storm and rain, he appears to have told his wife that he expected an attack from an assassin, loaded a brace of pistols, and gone to bed about eleven. Shortly after he declared that he heard a noise, went down stairs, and found a man leaving the house by a glass door opening on a shrubbery. The man fired a pistol at him. Shelley discharged one of his own in answer, but the powder only flashed in the pan. The man then leaped upon him, knocked him down, and closed with him. Shelley thereupon fired the

second pistol, wounding his assailant, he thought, in the shoulder; whereupon the man broke out into execrations: "By God, I will be revenged! I will murder your wife, I will ravish your sister! By God, I will be revenged!" He then made his escape. The others now rushed down stairs, but did not see the assailant, and after a while all retired again to bed, except Shelley and Daniel Hill, the servant, who had lately been released from prison. At four o'clock Shelley sent Daniel Hill to see what time it was, and instantly, as if he had been waiting for Shelley to be left alone, a man thrust his arm through the glass of the window and fired at him. The ball passed through Shelley's dressing-gown and a curtain, and buried itself in the wainscot. Shelley's pistol would not go off, and he attacked the ruffian with an old sword that he had found in the house. The servant rushed in, but the man had again escaped.

Such is Mrs. Shelley's account of the transaction; but be it observed that on neither occasion was the man seen by any one but Shelley, and that on the first attempt the man was leaving the house and not entering it.

Shelley afterwards gave a totally different account of the second attack. He said that he saw a face pressed against the window, fired, and followed the assassin out on to the lawn where he saw him, "a ghost or devil," leaning against a tree; on Shelley's approach he slipped into the wood. Shelley immediately set fire to the wood (he said) in several places, to burn the devil, and the conflagration was with difficulty extinguished. This last incident Mrs. Shelley does not mention in her letter, yet it could hardly have escaped her.

The official investigation of the affair showed two things: first, that there was a trampled place on the

lawn, but no footsteps leading to it except from the house, so that the prints were presumably made by Shelley himself; secondly, that the shot, which pierced Shelley's dressing-gown and the wainscot, was not fired from the window but from near the door, leading to the irresistible conclusion that it was fired by Shelley himself, probably while nervously fingering his pistol. This also accounts for Shelley's statement that his pistol would not afterwards go off.

The next day the whole party, in a condition of extreme nervous agitation, escaped to the house of Mr. Nanney, a friend and neighbour, who was also solicitor-general for the county.

Shelley declared that the assassin was a man called Leeson, into whose hands one of his Irish pamphlets had fallen, and who had sent it to Government. He added that a mysterious stranger had on the following day gone round Tremadoc and told the story to the tradespeople, saying that it was a ruse of Mr. Shelley's to escape from the place without paying his debts; an explanation unhappily not inconsistent with the facts; though Mr. Dowden says that this cruel assertion is amply disproved by the state of nervous excitement in which Shelley was found next morning by the agent Williams. Afterwards Shelley used to say that the internal pain he suffered from originated from the place where the assailant's knee had pressed against his side; and there seem to have been days long after when he said that he was dogged by Leeson, and refused to leave the house.

From Mr. Nanney's, on February 27th, Shelley wrote to his friend Hookham:—"MY DEAR SIR,—I have just escaped an atrocious assassination. Oh! send the £20 if you have it. You will perhaps hear of me no more.— friend, PERCY

SHELLEY." He was too much agitated to finish the letter properly, and his wife added a postscript. A few days afterwards the party crossed to Ireland and settled at Killarney. Shelley saw Tremadoc no more.

We are driven to the conclusion that the whole event was a nervous hallucination, and had no material existence except in Shelley's own mind. For months he had been leading a life that predisposed him to nervous terrors, and the only wonder is that he did not inflict on himself more grievous harm.

Tan-yr-allt has since Shelley's time been much improved. The rock has been cut away behind the house, and the garden laid out in terraces. Mr. Madocks's villa has been nearly doubled in size, but with its rough stones, daubed with an orange distemper, and its broad verandahs, it retains all the characteristics of the original house. We have often wondered whether a pair of ancient pistols, that hang in dusty dignity upon the kitchen wall, are the original weapons of the attack. The wood has grown up in all directions, though many of the trees, and notably an ancient spreading beech upon the lawn, must have been the same that Shelley's eyes often rested upon. The whole place has an air of exquisite seclusion; the high-road below is too far distant for the passing vehicles to be heard. From the lawn you can look up at the forest ascend-

ing tier after tier, with the fantastic craggy pinnacles peering over the top. All day long the cheerful laughter of the woodpecker rings through the glade: the doves croon in their high towers of green; and at night the owls flute melodiously. The wood itself is like an enchanted forest; in the cool green gloom the rivulets drip through the huge moss-grown boulders set deep in fern and rich water plants. In the ruins of the house which succeeded Shelley's cottage, the ash trees grow thick and the ivy spreads her net of cords over the gray stones; the only sounds are the voices of the birds, the pulsing of the water-wheel, and the distant laughter of children from Tremadoc Street. The spirit of Shelley himself, a fantastic Ariel, with his elfish beauty, but somehow remote from human love, a spirit of dusk and dew, of sailing clouds and sunset hues, still seems to haunt the spot. Lying at noon, in the green silence of the wood, it would not surprise one to see the light figure, with radiant eyes, agile, loose-limbed, come dashing down from the base of the precipice. "To himself he talks." Sweet as is the legacy of music and melody he has left us, there is something thin and unsubstantial about it. He is the poet of youth, but as the years go on we feel that Matthew Arnold was right. However high Shelley soars, it is in vain that he beats in the void his starred and silvered wings.

A RACE FOR LIFE.

Two men stood upon the sloping deck of a steamer lying stranded among the mud banks of a lagoon in Dahomey; the one was Captain Brown of the powerful screw-tug *Corona*, and the other James Cranton, representative of a wrecking syndicate which had purchased the vessel on the chance of getting her afloat. There was a fiery crimson gleam along the western horizon, against which the leathery foliage of the mangroves stood out black and clear as though carved in ebony; while the yellow water and bubbling slime beneath flashed back a lurid glow upon the rusty plates of the steamer and the haggard faces of the men.

"The story of this Dutchman is a tragic one," observed the Captain, wiping the perspiration from his forehead. "She broke two plates on a reef; then they beached her in here, and half the hands died of fever,—easy to understand that. She must have been a bad bargain for the syndicate."

"Yes," was the answer; "this pile of old iron and rusty machinery has cost us four thousand pounds altogether. All we have got in return is the few hundred pounds' worth of odds and ends on board the tug, and we've buried two men. The steamer will never float again; in two years she'll be buried in a mangrove forest; I've seen it before in Africa. However, we've all done our best, and now we'll get out of this ghastly place before we die of fever. I'm sick now, and you don't seem very bright."

So they slid down a line into a boat which lay alongside, and with a brief,

"Pull, lads," dropped wearily into the stern.

The crew bent to their oars, and as the blades dipped foul exhalations rose from the yeasty water across which the lights of the tug twinkled faintly through the gathering mist. It was, as Cranton had said, a ghastly place. The dingy foliage of the mangroves walled the lagoon in on every side. In places the watery forest rose, a maze of white stems and interlacing branches, from many feet of slime and froth; while in others the arched roots crept like the tentacles of a huge octopus far out across banks of evil-smelling mud, each pale branch overhead sending down a fresh shoot to feed on the corruption below. Over all brooded a dense atmosphere, heavy with the odours of putrefaction, which bring sickness and death to the European who breathes them.

When they reached the tug darkness was closing down, and it was just possible to make out three or four scantily attired figures crawling feebly about the lumbered deck among piles of hawsers, chains, and miscellaneous salvage.

"How are the two seamen now?" asked the Captain, as he climbed over the low rail; and a hoarse voice answered: "Sinking fast, I'm afraid, sir; no chance for a sick man here."

"Knock off now and heave the boat up. Tell them to start the fires; we go out to-morrow's tide;" and the Captain disappeared below.

For a time Cranton leaned over the rail, gazing into the gathering darkness, and wondering how long it would take him to recover the health

and money lost in this unfortunate venture. Forest and lagoon seemed to swarm with life. From somewhere beyond the mangrove fringe the howl of a hunting leopard rang out through the stillness ; water and mud heaved and bubbled with the movement of countless scaly creatures ; while at intervals the harsh croak of a wading stork echoed across the misty surface, or a swimming alligator ploughed a furrow across the steamer's bows. All these sounds Cranton knew and loathed. He had heard them before on the Amazon and the Niger, and knew that they had rung the death-knell of many a strong man. But there was another sound which promised life and health, and his flushed face brightened as a monotonous, vibrating note drifted up the night breeze ; it was the song of the long Atlantic swell sweeping across the thundering bar. With a last glance seawards, Cranton crawled into his stifling cabin, swallowed a bitter draught of whiskey and quinine, and flung himself down to sleep. Early next morning he was awakened by the rattling winch and the clank of chain, and going on deck he saw the sickly crew getting the anchor over the bows.

Presently the Captain strode to the end of the bridge and said : "The surf will be easy to-day ; there's a light air off shore, or deep as she is we'd never have got out." Then the telegraph tinkled, the propeller whirled up the foam astern, and with the muddy water boiling into white wreaths beneath her bows, the *Corona* steamed down the lagoon.

A seaman leaned over the rail, waving his hat, as they passed a spit of yellow sand. "Good-bye, Tom ; good-bye, Jim. Give the poor fellows a call, sir," he said. The Captain smiled, then he raised his cap, and grasped a lanyard. Three times the deep boom of the whistle rang out

across forest and water, and thrice the red ensign fluttered aloft, a glowing streak of colour against the morning blue, while rough weather-beaten men stood bareheaded in the rising sun. Then a wheeling cloud of bats and screaming parrots settled down again among the mangroves, and the forest closed round a lonely wooden cross.

"Thank God, we're off, and there are no more left behind. We're not out of the wood yet though," observed the grimy engineer, as he looked out through the gratings.

Presently a dense volume of dingy smoke streamed away from the *Corona's* funnel, and the boat trembled throughout to the vibration of her panting engines, for the roaring bar lay close ahead veiled in a white smother of foam. Out she went, swinging a streaming forefoot high into the air, or plunging to the bitts in a white-crested roller, wallowing and diving with flooded decks, until at last the surf was passed and she rose and fell smoothly on the glassy undulations of the Atlantic.

"Now for Sierra Leone and home," said the Captain, dashing the spray from his face, while a feeble attempt at a cheer went up, and this time the ensign rose to the mast-head. Then the *Corona* was put on a south-west course, and shore her way at a good ten knots an hour through the long blue swell, the flashing water roaring from beneath her bows and streaming away astern in streaky lines of white and green in the wake of the throbbing propeller, while sickly men crawled about the deck drinking in with delight the pure sea-breeze. Presently the Captain descended from the bridge and Cranton addressed him : "Better have a look below now ; the worst of the fever generally begins when you leave the malaria swamps and breathe the sea air."

So the two crept down into the stifling fore-castle, clinging tight to the iron-runged ladder at each wild roll. At first it was impossible to make out anything in the gloom, and the men stood with bent knees, balancing themselves against the heave of the vessel, and listening to the thunder of the water outside the vibrating plates each time the sharp bows cleft apart a brimming swell. When his eyes became accustomed to the darkness, Cranton moved towards a wooden shelf, and bending over a heap of dirty blankets, said, "Well, Johnson, how are you now? Hold up your head, and drink this." A faint light streamed in through a dirty port, as the steamer swung her head out of the sea, falling upon the hollow cheeks and soaking hair of a man, who stretched out a claw-like hand for the draught, and gasped: "About the same, sir; awful pain in all my bones, and something like hot iron round my skull; but the fireman there's raving mad, and the nigger hasn't spoke for hours."

Then a lip of green water washed above the glass, obscuring the light, and out of the shadow rose a terrified shout. The Captain shuddered as the tug lifted her bows again, and he saw the wreck of what had once been a strong man, holding a trembling hand before his eyes to shut out some imaginary horror.

"We must get them on deck while it's fine," said Cranton. "Rig an awning and hammocks for them. I'm afraid there'll be more down soon, and all our drugs are done."

"I hope not," said the Captain. "With the loss of the two poor fellows who died in the lagoon, and three helpless here, we'd be very short-handed if we got bad weather. It's lucky we shipped the three Krooboy, but I'd give six months' pay to be safe in the Trades."

As Cranton advised, so it was done; and the fever-stricken sufferers swung to and fro beneath an awning as the tug rolled along across the sun-lit sea, a lonely wedge of dark hull ringed about with creaming foam, in the centre of a great azure circle.

All that day, and for several days following, there was not a breath of air to ruffle the glassy surface of the swell which ran steep and high from horizon to horizon, as it often does off the African coast for no apparent cause. Every morning the sun rose through a purple haze, gleaming coppery red, and as he swung slowly west across the heavens poured down the pitiless heat of the tropics upon the plunging tug, until the pitch boiled out of the seams and the brass of the rail felt scalding to the touch of incautious fingers. The mate lay burning with fever in a hammock beneath the shade of the bridge-deck, while every now and then a fireman, dripping with perspiration and gasping for breath, dragged himself through the stokehold gratings to collapse limply on deck. So the Corona drove along, westwards ever, stemming the strong Guinea current, amid the clatter of blocks, chafing of gear, and groaning of timber, while her Captain and Cranton lay listlessly beside the wheel as the long hours dragged by, longing for a breath of cool air or the sight of a passing steamer from which they might obtain drugs or assistance.

One evening, after the most trying day of all, the Captain, who was gazing out into the sunset, said languidly: "I see all kinds of bad weather there, and the barometer's falling fast. It's the tornado season too, and we're loaded to the last inch. However, anything would be a relief after this." Sea and sky were one blaze of light, a hard brassy glare above, with long lines of fiery radiance trembling across the

swell below, while whirling wreaths of thin vapour drifted before an unfelt breeze across the red disk of the sinking sun.

Cranton walked forward, balancing himself to the heave of the deck, and leaned against the rail. A blood-red light glowed beneath the awning cloths and flashed along the dripping bows, each time the tug swung aloft with the backwash streaming down her sides. Bye and bye two half-naked Kroomen crawled from beneath the gratings in the bows, dragging a rigid black object after them towards the gangway. Cranton shuddered as he gazed, for presently the vessel rolled wildly downwards, and the corpse turned an awful face and sightless eyes towards him. Then the angle of the deck grew steeper, and it slid softly out through the gangway. There was a loud splash in what seemed to be a sea of fire, and the hideous thing lifted a black arm above the surface, bumped twice along the bends, and afterwards sank swiftly through the glancing wake astern, as though it had been drawn violently down. Cranton turned away with a cold feeling beneath his belt, and watched the darkness closing down. When the last glow had faded in the west, the foam wreaths under the bows and the black water along the bends blazed out into flashes of green and gold fire, while streaks of blue flame flickered along the horizon. This is common enough on the West Coast, but that night it was exceptionally brilliant, and the wreaths of vapour whirling across the low-hung crescent moon told of wind overhead.

"It looks as if we were in for a tornado; I never saw the glass lower," said the Captain, as a few drops of warm rain splashed along the deck. Then a little puff of cool air fanned their hot cheeks, and his voice rang out: "Harden down the hatch-wedges,

strip awnings, batten the scuttles. Every man fit to work stand by."

A few minutes later a roll of thunder echoed along the heavens, and the air was filled with the roar of falling water which hissed along the deck and gurgled inches deep through the scuppers. The telegraph tinkled twice *stand by*, but the engineer, lying gasping for breath in his narrow bunk, had already received a sterner summons. He had heard the African thunder before, and knew that, sick or well, he must be at his post that night; so he dragged himself into the engine-room, where he leaned heavily against a column.

For ten minutes the deluge continued, and then the thick curtain of rain was split up and blown away, and with a scream the tornado burst upon them. The sea grew crisp and white like wool; sheets of spindrift burst over the vessel, while dazzling phosphorescence blazed from every curling surge until the tug appeared to be steaming through living flame. For a time Cranton clung to a funnel-guy, half-choked and blinded with the mad rush of wind, though at intervals he could see the tall figure of the Captain gripping the weather spokes of the jarring wheel, while a seaman thrust upon them to lee. Already the smooth swell was changing into steep foaming seas, and the Corona dived through them, with the luminous water flying aft in sheets and the powdered drift driving over her like smoke. Presently, after the passing of a furious gust, Cranton caught the Captain's voice: "Hold the wheel till I get at the telegraph; she's drowning herself now." Then as he peered into the yellow glow of the binnacle, and strained his wrists upon the plunging wheel, the faint clang of a gong rose from below and a slackening of vibration told that the engines were turning more slowly.

The horrible turmoil of wind and rain lasted half an hour, then it settled down into a steady blow, and the phosphorescence faded from the water. All night the *Corona* staggered along, half buried in the seas which grew higher and steeper, until near dawn a great black wall rolled in over the bows. There was a crash of splintering timber, and while tons of water poured out over the rail, the rest disappeared through the deck in a swirling eddy.

"Fore hatch gone,—stand by with the tarpaulins, for your lives!" roared the Captain, and dropping from the bridge-deck Cranton staggered forward towards four dripping objects, knee-deep in water, struggling with the flapping tarpaulins. Twice the sheet was wrenched from their hands, and one seaman who loosed his hold in a frantic roll crawled back out of the scuppers with the blood streaming down his face. But the men knew that they were fighting for their lives as well as for the safety of the deeply loaded vessel; and at last the painted canvas was drawn across the aperture and battened down, while coils of hawsers and gear were piled upon the unsmashed boards.

When Cranton reached the bridge again, the Captain said: "I wish you'd slip below and see if there's much water in her, and how the mill is going." Gripping the ladder hard, to avoid being hurled among the whirling machinery, Cranton found the engineer standing with an anxious face, ankle-deep in water which spouted through the chequers of the floor-plates; while, oil-can in hand, a grimy subordinate leaned cautiously over the racing cranks. "The water's coming in faster than we can throw it out, I'm afraid; she's doing her best, listen," he said, and above the grinding clatter of rod and shaft, Cranton recognised the sharp metallic

clang of a gorged pump, and could see the iron suction-pipe throbbing and pulsing, as though alive, each time the ram hurled a solid jet of water over the side. "If we do no better the fires will be drowned before long; it's gained an inch since you came," the man went on; and Cranton shuddered as a roll sent the chilly fluid swishing round his ankles, while the buzzing cranks threw up a miniature cascade.

When he regained the bridge, the mate staggered up, saying briefly: "The tarpaulin's split again, the scuttle's burst, and it's more than a man's life is worth to go forward. I'm afraid she'll go down under us soon."

As if in answer, a white-crested roller rose up ahead, and next moment the fore-deck disappeared into the sea. For a second or two the little vessel staggered and seemed to stop, then, as she slowly shook herself free and swung aloft, the water rolled aft. There was a crash of splintering glass, a cloud of steam rose through the broken skylights as it fell hissing on the hot cylinder-heads below, and the rush struck the bulkhead a thundering blow. The three men looked at one another with ashen faces, until the Captain spoke. "It is nearly dawn now, and we must be close in to the Ivory Coast," he said. "We'll run in and chance finding a lagoon; anyway, it's better to risk the surf on a beach than to founder in deep water. Hard over, due north, helmsman."

So for a while the three leaned over the bridge rails, gazing out through the driving spray, as the circle of tumbling water grew wider and wider beneath the coming dawn. Then, with the suddenness of the tropics, the sun swung out from behind a bank of hard-edged clouds, and the dusky sea-plain changed in a moment to flashing green and snowy white, until

he disappeared again veiled in flying scud. A few minutes later something like a cluster of feathers rose to view upon the far horizon, and Cranton said hoarsely: "That must be some of the tall palms beyond Lahu. I've been on the Ivory Coast before."

Higher and higher grew the distant objects, until at last it appeared as if the trees sprang aloft from the midst of the sea. Then a shadowy background of low-lying forest rose to view, and one of the Krooboy crawled aft, clinging for his life to the rail as a sea burst across the vessel, and shouted excitedly: "I know him, sah, know him bad; be Lahu Lagoon, sah."

"Take your chance and let him run her in; the Krooboy know every inch of the coast," said Cranton, and while the Captain nodded his head, the helmsman whirling round the spokes, swung the Corona's bows towards the palms.

"It's our only chance; go down and tell Jim to hold out, and drive her all he can. It's a race now to get in before we founder," said the Captain, and Cranton, dodging a sea, dived into the engine-room, and safely reached the submerged floor-plates. The engineer splashed about among the rising water, while the drowned cranks hammered and gurgled amid a seething mass of foam.

"She's going all she's worth; come and see," he said, and together they waded into the stokehold. A roaring blast swept down the yawning ventilator shafts and rushed towards the trembling boiler front, where, stripped to the waist, two haggard firemen, streaming with perspiration, balanced themselves against the rolling as they forced the twinkling fires. Every now and then, as the tug lurched forward, a gurgling wave surged hissing among the red ashes

below the fire-bars, and the engineer shook his head. "It's tempting Providence now," he muttered, "for the boiler's an inch thick with scale and salt; she may go at any moment. Drive her, my lads!" and then he added in a whisper: "They've both got fever and have been at it eight hours; flesh and blood can do no more."

The most comforting thing, Cranton thought, was the ringing clang of the big pump and the hissing of the injection, and he knew that every throbbing cylinder and palpitating valve was doing its utmost in that wild race for life.

When he reached the bridge again, the Krooboy was pointing excitedly ahead and shouting: "Keep them tall palm open, sah, one lil' hand, plenty too much surf, sah." The coast-line now lay clear and bright in the watery sunshine, a strip of yellow beach, alternately visible and hidden by clouds of spray as the mile-long ridges of water burst upon it; beyond was a fringe of feathery palms, and behind these again what appeared to be a waste of mangroves.

"I can see no entrance, and if we go ashore the surf will smash every bone in our bodies. Steady helm!" said the Captain. Cranton glanced aft with his heart in his mouth at the ocean-walls that chased them astern or burst with a roar over the counter, while the whole vessel trembled with the shaking of her racing engines as she swung high on the crest. Then a shout from the Krooboy made him turn his eyes, and dragging out his glasses, he fancied he could see a smooth green riband of water winding through the chaos of foam ahead. The Corona stormed through it towards the deadly sand, all hands clinging to the rail wherever they could find a lee, gazing in half breathless silence at the yeast confusion before

them. At last the beach lay close at hand, and the air was filled with the roar of the surf, as every now and then a dark line of water rose up and blotted out forest and shore until it crumbled away into cascades of white upon the sand.

"Tarboard now, sah," said the Krooboy, and the helmsman glanced at the Captain with wonder in his face, for a starboard helm would cant them towards the worst of the surf. The Captain clenched his teeth and nodded his head, and the steamer's bows swung right inshore. Cranton felt his skin creep and his nerves tingle, and strove to choke down a wild desire to wrench the wheel out of the seaman's hands, and turn the vessel's bows anywhere but towards that white death ahead; but the negro clung to the binnacle, silent and rigid, like an ebony statue. Then he shouted, "Port now, port one time," and the watchers held their breath as they saw a sharply marked strip of rolling green water open between the mad smother on either side. The Captain threw himself upon the wheel, and aided by the helmsman spun the spokes round for dear life, and the bows pointed straight towards the narrow way where was salvation.

Then a harsh voice shouted "Hold on all," and a vast roller rose up astern as high as the flame-tipped funnel ring. Every eye was turned aft, for if that sea curled and broke too soon, all hands would be ground to pieces on the sand below. As they gazed, there was a roar and a rush, the *Corona* was caught up and swept madly forward on the foaming crest. Captain and helmsman clung to the spokes with a grip of steel, until the mass broke up and melted away, then,

sinking through the whirling backwash, the tug steamed safely into the smooth water across the bar.

Ten minutes later the engines were stopped and the Captain gasped out, "Thank God!" as the anchors plunged into the lagoon, and the little vessel swung smoothly up and down on the swell which worked in across the bar. Now that the decks were no longer swept the pumps could cope with the water, and in a few hours the holds were free.

There is little more to tell. The wind dropped and the sea went down, as suddenly as it generally does on that coast, and the *Corona* lay for a week, leisurely repairing damages, in a fairly healthy, sand-girded lagoon. Then it chanced that a little top-heavy patrol gunboat came rolling by, and in answer to a signal sent in a boat. When they learned the state of affairs, her officers stripped themselves of whatever comforts they had for the benefit of the fever-stricken crew, the surgeon provided advice and a goodly store of drugs, and the Commander lent them black firemen and deck-hands, to be landed at Sierra Leone. Then, after her crew had thanked the kindly officers fervently, the tug steamed out across the rolling bar, coaled at Sierra Leone, made a good passage up the Trades, and in due time reached home in safety, the sick recovering on the way.

James Cranton is now engaged in an attempt to float a stranded vessel off the Brazilian coast, while the *Corona* is employed in Channel towage; but none of those concerned in it will ever forget the unfortunate attempt to salve the stranded Dutchman.

THE ROMAN CHURCH IN FRENCH FICTION.

It used to be thought that what is known as the religious novel was a peculiar growth of British soil. M. Jules Lemâitre in one of his essays points out, as a strange idiosyncrasy of us islanders, that we are in the habit of mixing up our story-telling with the discussion of all sorts of moral and spiritual problems. In his own happy land if people want a work of edification they buy it separately, and do not expect to find it amalgamated with a work of fiction. But even in France the religious question has become too urgent to be ruled out of any department of literature. M. Zola's *LOURDES* and *ROME*, M. Huysmans's *EN ROUTE*, and the charming tales of M. Yves de Querdec, to name no others, are striking cases in point among contemporary fiction.

No more telling illustration of the strength of the prevailing current of thought could be given than the fact that the Apostle of Naturalism should have devoted two very thick volumes to the examination of certain phases of Catholic life. It is not necessary to say very much about *LOURDES* except in so far as it elucidates its successor. It illustrates M. Zola's familiar advantages and defects as a writer; his easy use of accumulated details so as to produce the desired impression; his power of giving a symbolic meaning to some central feature of his story and leaving the reader at last with one strange and grandiose image stamped on his mind, summing up for him the whole spirit of the book. Such, for instance, is the hospital train, bearing its load of

misery to the place of miracles; this grotesque entity, made up of hundreds of souls in pain breathing out their desperate desire in the Latin hymns of the Church, while the peasants in the fields look up and listen and wonder as the train speeds by. And on the other hand, one is forced once more to recognise the curious limitations of his powerful mind. His characters have no development: each is represented, as in the old ballads, by a single gesture or phrase; M. de Guersaint always amiably volatile, like an innocent elderly sparrow; Sister Hyacinthe always gay and ready for duty in a clean apron and cuffs; Marie always innocent and emotional, with her golden hair. Then we note his tremendous assumptions, comical in the case of one who glows with righteous indignation at the bare thought of the assumptions of faith; his absolute blindness to certain generally admitted canons of conduct; the hatred of the ascetic principle or what he considers such, that is responsible for such impossible touches as that of his hero Froment's utterance to the woman who confesses to him that her visit to Lourdes as a helper in a great work of charity is merely the cloak for a guilty intrigue, a three days' carnival of the flesh, "Madam, I pity and respect you."

In this young abbé M. Zola has sought to represent the conflict between the Church and reason. His father is a man of science, his mother a fair saint. A disappointment in love reinforces his inherited instinct of devotion by sending him into the Church; but hardly has he

donned the cassock, than his father's spirit awakes in him, and of course wins an easy victory over the vague emotional mysticism which is M. Zola's only idea of religion. M. Zola conceives of all forms of belief as the expression of man's need only. The testimony to a response from without the man to the need of his spirit he never seems for an instant to consider, dismissing all the phenomena of conversion and renewal of character under spiritual influence as so many instances of hallucination, or at most the reflex action on the soul of its own desire.

It would be useless to expect from M. Zola any new light on the phenomena of the life of faith; but he is both amusing and instructive when he comes to describe the politics of the faithful. He has a true sympathy and devotion for little Bernadette; the exquisite soul, whose dream of the wonder-working virgin created the whole movement of the Lourdes pilgrimages, and who was sent away to die, shut out as far as possible from all participation in the triumph of her work,—though indeed she would never have cared for, or even understood, the lines on which the Fathers of the Grotto were shaping the work that she had begun. He leaves a vivid impression of the contrast between the ardent faith and hope of the helpers of the poor, of this great wail of human misery beating at the Virgin's shrine in an agony of supplication, and the commercial spirit that desecrates the place, the commerce of relics, the keen competition between the clerical organisers and the lay community, with their shops and hotels; the passion and the pity, the meanness and the bathos of it all. Pierre Froment is left at the end of the book entirely dominated by his parental instincts, ready to cast his breviary to the moles and

the bats. He re-appears in ROME as a Neo-Christian socialist, a fervent worker among the poor of Paris, convinced that the mission of the Church is to set herself at the head of a great social movement for the benefit of the masses. Encouraged by such work as the Marquis de Munn's in France, by Cardinal Manning's attitude in the dockers' strike, and by Cardinal Gibbon's sanction of the movement of the Knights of Labour, he writes a book, indicating what he conceives to be the part of the Church in the reorganisation of society, and finds to his great surprise that while he supposes himself to have been writing in the interests of religion, he and his book have been denounced at Rome. The situation is obviously studied from the episode of Lamennais and the *Avenir*; but the extreme simplicity which M. Zola attributes to his hero in this stage hardly harmonises with the picture of his disillusioned state at the close of the volume on Lourdes. How he arrives at Rome in the pious conviction that "an accused priest who comes to defend himself finds all the doors opening before him of themselves," and how he finds himself from the outset entangled in a mysterious web of intrigue, is pictured with all the impressiveness that comes of M. Zola's mastery of cumulative detail.

The matter, which had seemed so simple in Paris, of gaining an audience of the Pope and defending himself to the Head of the Church directly, appears now as a thing only to be attained by infinite diplomacy. Thus the influential Cardinal Nani enlarges on the necessity of extreme prudence. "He ventured to say that it would be wise to distrust the immediate personal surroundings of the Pope. Alas, His Holiness was so good, was so prone to think well of every one, that his confidential servants

were not always chosen with the necessary care. You never knew to whom to appeal, nor into what snare you might not walk unawares. He even indicated that it would never do to appeal directly to His Eminence the Secretary of State, because he was involved in, and paralysed by, a perfect network of intrigue. And as the Cardinal spoke thus, very gently and with perfect unction, the Vatican seemed like a place guarded by treacherous and jealous dragons, a place where you dared not enter a door, risk a step, hazard a limb, without being quite certain beforehand as to whether you would not leave your corpse there." So by degrees in the antique city, sleeping its age-long sleep, dreaming its dream of eternity, the passionate young priest finds himself cheated with receding hopes, baulked, in a way that is dark to him, of his honest desire to explain himself face to face with the spiritual Father of Christendom. Long before his audience with the Pope approaches the sphere of the practicable he has fallen a victim to the subtle discouragement of his surroundings; he finds how helpless he is with his simple faith and his child-like imaginings in a net-work of international complications.

More than this, as he grows familiar with the city, and follows out the habits formed in Paris in works of charity and pity to the miserable victims of ruinous speculation, he realises the isolation from the poor and humble of the splendid ecclesiastical corporation that calls itself the hierarchy of Rome. His dream of the Galilean, the Gentle Jesus of the miserable and despised, the little ones of the earth, becomes to him more and more impossible of realisation. It is thus that the Pope appears to him, at the presentation of Peter's Pence, or celebrating mass at Saint

Peter's. "As if in a setting of goldsmith's work, his thin waxen body seemed to be stiffened in his white vestments heavy with gold embroidery. He kept a hieratic and haughty immobility, like a dried-up idol, gilded centuries ago, among the smoke of sacrifices. Amid the death-like stillness of the face the eyes alone lived, —eyes sparkling like black diamonds, fixed far off, out of earth, on the Infinite. He had not a look for the crowd; he lowered his eyes neither to right nor to left, absorbed in heaven and unknowing what was happening at his feet. And this idol, thus carried about, as if deaf, dumb, and blind in spite of the brilliance of his eyes, in the midst of this frenzied crowd which it seemed neither to hear nor to see, assumed a formidable majesty, a disquieting grandeur, all the stiffness of dogma, all the immobility of the wrappings with which it had been exhumed and which alone held it erect."

Certainly this is not the view of any possible priest that ever wore cassock. These are the reflections, not of the Abbé Froment, but of the naturalist Goliath swelling in indignation against the very shadow of the Christian habit in its distinctive features of self-discipline and contemplation. But the Abbé Froment is only a mouthpiece. His Christianity is nothing but a vague humanitarianism, deriving its inspiration indeed from the teaching of Galilee but divorced as far as possible from all that gives body and definiteness to that teaching, from doctrine, from discipline whether of self or society, from the great distinctively Christian virtues and from that habit of mind and soul which alone makes the sustained practice of charity possible. A man, to whom religious contemplation is a madness and the obligation of purity a degrading superstition, cannot possibly

paint a soul in the act of transition from one form of belief to another. We cannot sympathise with the Abbé Froment in the loss of his faith; we see only too clearly that he never had it. There is no psychological interest in the account of Pierre's gradual awakening, though it is devised with a good deal of mechanical ingenuity; "He seemed absurd to himself, with his dream of a purely spiritual Papacy, in this ancient seat of glory and earthly dominion." But the worst is that the reader shares Pierre's impression about himself, and not least so when, on returning from his unsuccessful expedition, his belief in his Church finally shattered by his interview with the Pope, he finds salvation, so to speak, in a manual of popular science. That, which M. Zola never will or can understand, is just the fact which makes his characters unreal and the evolution of his story mechanical. The Christian consciousness in the poor devotees of Lourdes and Rome, in Cardinal Boccanera with all his Pagan pride, in the Pope, whom he represents simply as the heir of Cæsar's rage for dominion, clutching with his senile power at the sceptre of the world, warming his miserable remnant of life in the glowing thought of the treasure which stands in a triple coffer at his bed-side, nay, even in the frantic ambition and unprincipled intrigue of the College of Cardinals,—these are all things to be reckoned with. No one who really possesses the scientific spirit, of which M. Zola talks so much and has so little, can deny the importance as phenomena if nothing else of the attested experiences of men

Who rowing hard against the stream
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream.

Amid all the clash of rival beliefs
and unbeliefs thoughtful men are

becoming less and less inclined to deny the value of the testimonies, reiterated age after age, to some response from the Beyond to the human cry. "This poor man cried and the Lord heard him"; it is not possible for any one who has come into vital contact with souls of which this is the sincere language, to fall back on an elementary manual of physics as the long-sought key to the universe. M. Zola has been forced by the current of the times to undertake a subject with which he has no kind of sympathy, and in spite of all his vast ability he deals with it like a school-boy. Even the great scene of the book, where Pierre has audience of the Pope, telling as are many of the details, leaves us cold.

The book, in short, is a tract, with all the faults of a tract; it is written to edify the faithful according to the Gospel of Naturalism. There is much brilliant descriptive writing; indeed, as a critic has said with truth, a valuable guide-book to Rome might be quarried out of M. Zola's pages, and, it may be added, without seriously damaging the story, which is a doubtful compliment to the composition of the work. The old follower of Garibaldi, "one of those old men who remain more virile and more passionate than the young," Santonobo, the peasant priest, with his Italian vengeance, Count Prada, Dario, Benedetto, and above all the old Cardinal, proudly true to the traditions of his house and his faith in the midst of the decadence in which he lived and the ruin which he foresaw, these and others are living figures; and the book itself possesses, what M. Zola's works seldom fail of, a certain grandeur and massiveness of total effect. But it is a tract for all that, an eternal plea for the things of the flesh.

The cant of the beauty and glory of nature, the insistence on the

natural, by which is meant the merely animal side of human life, is going, it may be hoped, somewhat out of fashion; but M. Zola, still firm in his devotion to a receding standard, is as far as ever from seeing that he who aims at being nothing more than a natural man, is very apt to become considerably less than a beast. This attitude is responsible for some serious blemishes of tone and taste in what is otherwise, with all its inadequacy, a finely conceived and carefully executed work, not unworthy of its author's reputation.

M. Huysmans's *EN ROUTE* approaches the subject from an entirely different point of view. M. Zola, as we have seen, even when he thinks he is adopting the point of view of a believer, looks at the Church inevitably from the outside. It is to him a great political system; and his hero's faith crumbles because the Father of Christendom does not step down from his throne to mingle in the conflict as the chief of a socialist propaganda. There is no more of the religious essence in his books on Lourdes and Rome than in Hansard's Debates. M. Huysmans has hazarded a very different and much more difficult flight. His is really, what the other book only pretends to be, a drama of the interior life. His hero, a Decadent writer with an exasperated sense of the exquisite, is paying for a long course of sensual excess by a bitter disgust of life. It is this that draws him to what is gloomy and morbid in the art of the Middle Ages, the Dance of Death, the throned skeleton, the dread of the flesh, the hatred of life. So we find him haunting the churches of Paris, and by preference those that have most of this early Gothic spirit. And yet though the dregs of the cup of pleasure are bitter on his palate, habit persists where inclination has died.

"I have no wish to pray," he says of himself. "I am haunted by Catholicism, intoxicated by its atmosphere of incense and wax. I prow about the Church, touched to tears by its prayers, searched to the marrow of my bones by its psalmody and chants. I am sick of my life, tired of myself, and yet how far from leading another existence. . . . And then,—and then,—if these feelings come to me in sacred places I become hard and dry of soul again the moment I leave. My heart is a callosity, a burnt-out cinder; I am good for nothing."

Still as he haunts these sacred places, the beauty of holiness, that ideal beauty of which in his worst moments he has never ceased to be a worshipper, speaks to him, draws him by secret persuasive ways to itself. Like Saint Augustine, he has been a lover of love, *amans amare*; and amid the austere loveliness of lost Gothic art, with the exquisite boys' voices chanting the ancient plain-song of the Middle Ages, his whole being melts in a confused longing for purity, for deliverance. He curses the ignominy of his existence. Horrible temptations, reminiscences of a perverted youth, assail him at the moments when this longing is almost on the point of transformation into a settled will. He hates himself and yields; he rises and falls again, sinning by what seems an odious compulsion, and loathing himself with an impotent rancour that has no strength to say, *This shall not be*.

Gradually, as in obedience to the counsels of his spiritual adviser, he continues to frequent the churches and to kneel with those who pray, the intense selfishness of his preoccupation begins to give way to something of sympathy for those poor pensioners of the divine pity whom he sees at vespers at Saint Sulpice; those unhappy ones who came to

claim from Heaven a little of that love which men refused them; and he ended, he who had only prayed for himself, by joining his orisons to theirs, by praying for them. The fierce disgust of the sated sensualist for all humanity, and especially for that half of it which he has most wronged and by which he has most suffered, gives place in him to a deep sense of human pity and human kinship. Even the poor workwomen at the early mass touch him with fraternal feeling. "They knew,—those poor souls who came to seek in the communion the force to live through their day of weary toil and servile exigence—that they were the living abode of God, and doubted not that, in confiding Himself to them, He required of them in turn that they should remain humble and sorrowful. And what did it matter to them, then, that their days were passed in the narrow round of menial employment?"

In the old days he had studied, with the interest of an artist enamoured of strange forms of human consciousness, the lives of the great Mystics. Now he himself began to feel, through the consciousness of his own self-absorption and misery, something of that divine love which had seemed to him then a pitiful, an almost ludicrous hallucination. He begins to conceive what may be that passion of the human and the finite for the First and only Fair, even while he says self-despairingly, "If I think of Him, it is only to ask of Him a little happiness."

The priest, to whom he refers himself, treats him with all the skill of a man accustomed, not only by years of experience but by the tradition of his office, to the direction of souls. There is something strange to a Protestant reader in the rapidity of his spiritual diagnosis, his masterly inactivity, so to speak, in his certainty that the

truth will justify itself and the wanderer find his way home along the path marked out by temperament and circumstance. And yet, while he seems to do nothing, he gives in reality the necessary impetus at the right moment; he speaks the critical word; until the neophyte finds himself led, he knows not how, trembling, shrinking, doubting still, to the portal from which he had fancied himself for ever excluded.

The book is a pæan of the contemplative life which the world ignores. "The doctrine of mystic substitution," says a monk of La Trappe to Durtal in his retreat, "escapes them completely. They cannot understand that the substitution of the innocent for the guilty, when it is a question of enduring a merited penalty, is necessary. It does not realise that by being willing to suffer for others the monks establish a solidarity of good which forms a counterpoise to the solidarity of evil. God knows by what cataclysms this unconscious world would be threatened if, in consequence of a sudden disappearance of all the cloisters, this saving equilibrium were removed."

The mystic view of substitution, which is by no means peculiar to that Church which has preserved the system of the cloistered life, rests on the idea of the soul's union with her Lord in His sufferings, even as that great mystic Saint Paul spoke of "filling up what was left behind of the sufferings of Christ." So in all ages, holy men and women have borne the sins of their loved ones, or of all who lie in wickedness, and amid the revel of a careless world have lifted up the holy hands of intercession without wrath or doubting.

The highest sanctity is not an absorption in a selfish happiness of communion with the Divine; this is a love that dwells among the rocks, and whoso follows the Fair Shepherd

must walk after Him through the shadows of death and bear in his turn the woes and miseries of humanity. The legends of the Mystics tell us of saints who have actually attracted to themselves by sympathy the bodily maladies of those for whom they prayed; but what is this to the sympathy with the spiritual anguish of him who aspires to the mystic union of the Lord of Sorrows? This is a hard saying, and yet its invincible attraction appears once more in this story of a Decadent. It is not ease, brightness, pleasure, after all, that attracts man. The thing that lies deepest in his heart is the instinct of devotion, the passion of sacrifice. To this phase of modern Catholicism M. Huysmans has given a singularly penetrating and touching expression.

"'You drive very well,' says Durtal to the monk who takes him to the station from the Trappist convent in which he has spent his period of retreat. 'Yes, I forgot to tell you that beside my other functions I exercise at need that of coachman.' And Durtal thought how wonderful are these men who live the inward life in God. When they consent to descend again to earth they are the wisest and the most audacious of business men. In other surroundings these men would have just as easily created great factories and founded banks. And it is the same with the women. When you think of the practical business faculty and the diplomatic self-possession which an abbess must possess in order to rule her community, you have to allow that the only women, truly intelligent, truly remarkable, are not to be met in the drawing-rooms of society, but at the head of cloisters."

Have men ever fathomed the absolute sanity of saintliness, or the immense power over oneself and the world wielded by a soul that is pure of all self-seeking? It is easy to smile

at the visions, the hallucinations if you like, of a Saint Teresa; but what are these in all mystic literature but attempts to express the inexpressible, the things which Saint Paul wisely kept silence upon as not lawful to be uttered? But turn from the babbling in which the soul strives to express the infinite, to her mighty work of organisation and reform; you do not find the hysteric visionary there, but an eminently wise, sane, and energetic woman, not of the world, but mastering it from a height above it.

The Mystics of the Seventeenth Century, Madame Guyon, Fénelon, and even the beloved Saint Francis de Sales, come poorly off in the conversations between Durtal and his hosts; and Catholicism, as generally understood and practised, fares very little better. "Fénelon and his fellows," he decides, "were a set of financiers and valets. But in their case there was a certain charm, a certain talent; whereas now the bishops are for the most part neither less intriguing nor less servile, but they have neither talent nor dignity. They are drawn from the worst set of the priesthood; they are ready for anything; try them and you find them souls of old usurers, low tricksters, and rascals."

After all, there is much in the criticism that serious Catholics have levelled at the book. It seems sincere; it contains passages of thrilling religious emotion, of tender and almost profound religious thought. For example: "There are two ways of getting rid of a thing which troubles you, to throw it from you or to let it drop. The first implies an effort of which the soul is perhaps not capable; to let it fall costs you no trouble; it is simple, without fatigue and within the reach of everybody. To throw it from you implies a certain interest, a certain animation, even a certain fear; to let it fall is indifference, absolute con-

tempt. Believe me, use this means, and Satan will flee." Yet how little can our English world understand the passionate care about the details of church-music and architecture which agitates this singular convert. How puerile it would seem to an earnest Anglican not to be able to pray in a particular church because Gounod's music was sung there instead of Palestrina's. That absorption in unessential detail, which is the bane of an excessive and effeminate culture unbraced by moral energy and earnestness, is felt everywhere and gives a singular disquieting attraction to this bizarre and fascinating book, perhaps the most characteristic fruit up to the present time of the mystic reaction in France.

M. de Querdec's tales do not call for an elaborate analysis. They represent a popular phase of liberal Catholicism. His curé is in reality what the Abbé Froment pretends to be, a sincere and zealous young priest imbued with an ardent sympathy for the toilers of the world, and perfectly convinced that Rome is the destined instrument of their emancipation. In his village he takes full advantage of the reconciliation of the Church with the Republic to interest himself in the social questions that crop up in such places. His frank republicanism creates at first a misunderstanding between him and the local lord of the soil, who is sulking, like Achilles, in his tent because the village grocer and boot-maker and the rest of the municipal council will not take his advice or let him govern them for their good. How he reconciles the Count to the village and the village to the Count, lays hold of the young people, interests himself in co-operative farming, and is finally rewarded by well-earned pro-

motion to a wider sphere, is very prettily and convincingly told, if perhaps somewhat in the manner of THE MONTHLY PACKET. The LETTRES D'UN CURÉ DE CANTON opens with a scene or two of delicious humour, where the curé, just arrived at the big manufacturing town which is to be his future field, is besieged by priests from neighbouring parishes and honourable women not a few, anxious to possess themselves of what they call his method, whereas the good man has no method at all, and does nothing but bring his "sanctified common-sense" to bear on each case as it arises.

As we read these books one after another, different in aim, in scope, in style as they are, and poles apart in sympathy, they still leave behind them the impression of the tremendous energy and vitality of that form of religion with which they are concerned. It is not for us to say which is nearer the truth. M. Zola with his "common people, tranquil in unbelief," on which he builds his hopes for the future of his country, or M. de Querdec with his certainty that the hostility of the people to the Church is a mere matter of misunderstanding. One thing we note; the issue is between Catholicism and unbelief. Protestantism is regarded, as High Churchmen in this country regard Unitarianism, namely, as no faith at all. And in the tremendous pretensions, and ever-fresh vitality of this organisation, we almost accept its own proud boast, *Semper, ubique, et omnibus*; and we say to ourselves that if she be not indeed the eternal witness of God, she must be the crowning temptation of these last days, the Power enthroned in place of God, to be the supreme test of the faith of his children, "upon whom the ends of the world have come."

STUDY IN COLONIAL HISTORY.¹

"Go where the traveller will within the bounds of the mighty dominion which the genius of Englishmen has won for the race, he will find a want of confidence in Downing Street. The Colonial Office was born in ignorance, its whole existence has been passed in ignorance, and it will die in ignorance. . . . a calamity or a rebellion can be relied upon to wake up the British public; but though many experiments have been tried, no part of the Empire has been discovered which will wake up Downing Street." This terrible accusation may have been read in a paper which, under the title of *THE EMPIRE AND DOWNING STREET*, and bearing the signature *Colonial*, was lately published in *THE NEW REVIEW*. We do not propose to discuss the paper itself. Its purport, as the foregoing extract sufficiently shows, is a complaint against British indifference in general, and a sweeping indictment of official apathy in particular. But we have quoted it, as we believe that the general attitude of the Colonies towards Downing Street is substantially that which the writer asserts it to be; and, though something might possibly be said on the other side, nobody who knows them will doubt for a moment that the Colonies at any rate find Downing Street to be solely to blame. If the fact remain that the Colonial Office is mistrusted, there is no profit in disputing as to who is responsible for so lamentable a state of affairs. British ignorance of colonial affairs is un-

doubtedly very great, and it is well that it should be exposed. Nor is it a valid retort, however true it may be, that British ignorance of the Colonies is matched only by colonial ignorance of Britain. If Britain aspires to stand at the head of a great Empire, it is the business of her people to study that Empire that they may learn to guide and govern it aright. The Colonies may well plead that they have their own affairs to look after, and that it is not for them to do the work of the mother country.

But the writer of this article passes judgment on the Colonial Office on account of ancient as well as recent history, and it is to ancient history that he appeals when he propounds his remedy for existing evils. "The highest conception," he says, "of the relations of a colony to the mother country was the Elizabethan and the Puritan, to which it is to be hoped that we are slowly reverting; the lowest, the Liberal system of founding new Britains with gaol-birds and Irish dynamiters." And again: "When from the North Pole to the South and from the rising of the sun to its setting it is recognised, as it was in the time of Elizabeth, that a colony is merely a piece broken off the mother country, and floated into position as it were, then and not till then will there be true Confederation." Lest our readers should exhaust themselves in a vain endeavour to verify this comparison of Elizabethan colonisation, we may remind them that but one colony, Virginia, was planted in Elizabeth's time, and that it was in danger of perishing when it was

¹ CALENDAR OF STATE PAPERS, COLONIAL; edited by the late W. Noel Sainsbury and the Hon. J. W. Fortescue. London, 1896.

rescued in 1622 by King James the First who, whatever else he may have been, assuredly was no Puritan.

As regards the Puritan conception of the relations of a colony with the mother country, it must be remembered that the Puritans were after all but a party in the nation, and that the colonists for which they felt most keenly were voluntary emigrants belonging to that party, whom in the last resort they could join in their exile. The little association of gentlemen who founded the Canterbury settlement in New Zealand, to quote the nearest parallel that we can find in the nineteenth century, doubtless felt an interest in the colony of their own creation which they did not extend to the Empire; and so likewise did the Puritans in New England. For other colonists they evinced no such tenderness; they coerced royalist Barbados, for instance, into submission by force; and it was not the Protector but the Governor of the island who declared it to be a limb of the Commonwealth. Nor, we may add, whatever the sentiments of the Puritans towards the Colonies, were the Colonies particularly forward to help a Puritan government. Barbados, by its lukewarmness and obstruction, was to a considerable degree responsible for the failure of Cromwell's great design against the Spanish Indies; and the government of Massachusetts refused to join the rest of New England in helping him in an expedition against the Dutch settlements. Finally the Puritans made a practice of transporting gaol-birds, and in particular Irish rebels, to the Colonies, so that the Liberal system, if Liberal system it be, was also the Puritan system.

We offer these remarks in no carping spirit, for the statements which we have quoted are, we grant, but subsidiary to the main purpose of *Colonial's* paper. But it seems to us

a pity that in a review of British colonial policy the British ignorance of colonial history, of which colonists justly complain, should be still further bewildered by vague and detached remarks, which, though doubtless full of meaning to the writer, are sadly misleading to his readers. Thus, to speak of the "stately fabric which has been built on the foundations of Chatham and Pitt" is to misguide the student of colonial history; the foundations of the Empire were laid a full century before Chatham was born, and laid, as we shall presently show, at a most unfortunate time. To understand the course of British colonial policy aright we must go back indeed to Puritan times, but we must not leap at one bound from them to 1759.

The recent issue of a fresh volume of the *Calendar of Colonial State-Papers* under the direction of the Master of the Rolls is most timely for our purpose. These *Calendars* may well appear to the superficial reader to be the driest of dry bones, little worth the labour of sorting and arranging them; but this will not, we think, be the opinion of any one who may be at the pains to study them. It is true that of all the names in the bulky index to the present volume there are few, excepting those of the King, the Duke of York, and a few leading Ministers, most of which appear only in the shape of formal signatures, that are familiar even to educated Englishmen. But that is a small matter. We must get rid of Carlyle's theory that all great movements in human thought and action may be traced to the influence of some single great man; it is no doubt convenient for purposes of superficial study or of literary art, but as a historical axiom it is something less useful, and might even prove extremely misleading. This volume contains the records of four years of colonial

administration, and that administration was, for good or for evil, assuredly conducted by some man or men. Indeed there is a great deal of small but indispensable work to be done in the world which demands often as heroic a spirit for its accomplishment, and leaves as deep a mark on the future, as any of the deeds of the giants. The principles established in the course of this work would, if they could be traced to any one man, be probably called by his name, but being the creation of a number of small men they are summed up in the one word *tradition*. The Colonial Service, being one which from the nature of the case vests a number of men with powers of high responsibility, is peculiarly rich in traditions; and it might be worth the while of some competent writer to trace their origin, and to follow them, some to their decay, others to their embodiment in the standing orders of the service or to their sanctification as axioms of colonial policy.

The most notable feature in the volume before us is the persistent effort of the Crown to extend its authority over the Colonies, and the jealousy of the Colonies in opposing such extension. In 1680 our colonial possessions included the New England settlements of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Plymouth, together with Maine, New York, Maryland, Virginia, and Carolina; New Hampshire had just begun to enjoy a separate existence, and William Penn's patent for Pennsylvania was in preparation. Then, leaving the American continent, there were Newfoundland, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Barbados, and the Leeward Islands of Saint Kitts, Nevis, Antigua, and Montserrat. Of these Virginia, New Hampshire, Barbados, Jamaica, and the Leeward Islands alone were under the immediate

authority of the Crown, the remainder being granted by patent or charter to sundry proprietors and companies. But we must not attach a modern significance to the phrase *the immediate authority of the Crown*. Every English possession, down even to the tiny island of Nevis, had its own little house of life-peers created by the King, and its own little house of representatives, strong in its power of the purse, elected by what was called the people. The outward and visible sign of the Crown's authority in this latter class of colony was the Governor, who received his commission from the King. It was thus that the foundations of the Empire were laid, and it will be obvious at first sight that they were not best fitted for a united Empire.

Nevertheless, setting the idea of an Empire aside, the principle commends itself by its common sense. The various infant settlements were unquestionably likely to manage their local business for themselves better than Whitehall could manage it for them. Chartered companies again would be freer and more elastic than a department of government, even though official routine was but in its infancy. Their powers were restricted by the clauses of their charter, and all that was needed to keep them in the right way was the supervision of a central authority, or, in other words, of the Crown. But, as fate ordained it, this needful element of supervision was precisely that which was wanting; and this is the first great fact in the history of our colonial policy. The Crown was so busy with the task of defending itself at home that it had no leisure to attend to the Colonies. And when the long agony of the quarrel between King and Parliament had at last worn itself out, the Commonwealth was fully occupied with the tasks of subduing and uniting

Ireland and Scotland to England, and of sweeping the Dutch off the sea. Finally the Protector, though he could indeed send expeditions against the Dutch in the New Netherlands, against the French in Nova Scotia, and against the Spaniards in Hispaniola, could spare no leisure to mind colonial business, and frankly wrote as much to the Governor of Rhode Island.¹ Those years of immunity from English supervision turned the whole course of English colonial history.

Then came the Restoration, and with it an effort to grasp again the reins which had been dropped so long. The large measure of self-government allowed to the Colonies had enabled them to tide successfully over the interregnum, but had also encouraged them to assume, with more or less reason, the airs of independent communities. The Crown began to repent that it had allowed them so much liberty, and as early as January, 1661, a scheme was devised to place the whole of them under the King's immediate command. Virginia had been in this position since 1625, Jamaica since the original conquest, and the Leeward Islands were also ready to hand. Barbados was added by purchase (the money, it may be added, had not been paid eighteen years later), and there the process stopped, doubtless from lack of funds. Meanwhile colonial affairs were placed in the hands of a Committee, which presently took to itself the familiar name of the Board of Trade and Plantations, and after due lapse of many genera-

tions developed finally into the much-abused Colonial Office.

The Board began its existence, as we have just shown, with what would now be called Imperial ideas. The extension of the authority of the Crown has an ugly sound to modern ears, particularly when the Crown signified such a man as King Charles the Second, but those who urged it might rejoin with perfect truth, if they could return to us for a day, that they wished to draw closer the tie that bound the Colonies to the mother country. Certain colonies, as they knew, were settlements not so much of the English people as of an English faction, and that a defeated faction, and unless they were to cease to be colonies they must be brought, not necessarily by harsh measures, certainly not by forfeiture of their free institutions, under the authority of the Crown. For an empire without a central authority is no empire. Whatever therefore the leaning of our own sympathies, whether to Royalist or Puritan, it must be confessed that from an Imperial standpoint the first Colonial Office was right; and if indeed it had proceeded at once to coercive measures it would have acted only as the Puritans had acted towards Barbados. But it preferred to behave mildly and to bide its time.

Meanwhile the rulers of England took another step towards closing the gaps in the Empire, as it might be called, by passing the Acts of Trade and Navigation, which practically fixed the customs-tariff for the whole of the English possessions, restricting the trade of the Colonies to the channel of England, and levying duties for the use of the King. The Acts were not popular in the Colonies, which had found freedom of trade both easy and profitable. They entailed, too, the appointment of a King's Receiver in every colony where it was worth while

¹ See the letter printed by Carlyle in CROMWELL'S LETTERS AND SPEECHES, *appendix xxx*. The official records of the Protectorate are singularly barren in respect of all colonial matters excepting the expedition to Jamaica. In 1656 the Assembly of Virginia sent its Governor to England on business. (Thurloe's COLLECTION OF STATE PAPERS, v. 497.) But there is nothing to show that Thurloe attended to it, overworked as he already was.

to keep him, so that the representative of Imperial taxation was always before the colonists in the flesh, and in many cases was the only symbol of Imperial authority. It was not wise policy to identify the English sovereignty with the tax-gatherer, but in cases where the King had not the right to appoint a governor it was inevitable. The Colonies, however, with one notable exception, accepted the Acts of Trade and Navigation, though with some natural grumbling. They did not raise the principle of no taxation without representation: they recognised that in return for the right to manage their own affairs it was not altogether inequitable that they should make some contribution to Imperial funds; and their charters, at any rate, forbade them to engage in a war of tariffs on their own account. Lastly, the Colonies hoped that in times of danger they could count upon English protection.

But the question of Imperial defence was no simple matter in those days. England's powers of protection were limited by the fact that she possessed no standing army. Charles indeed had made shift to preserve the Coldstream Guards, and to create the Grenadier Guards, the Blues, two troops of Life Guards, and two regiments for the garrison of Tangier, but Parliament steadily refused to recognise their existence. The House of Commons never voted a sixpence for their maintenance, nor passed a clause to enable discipline to be preserved among them. Materials of war England could and did supply with some liberality, and the King even went so far as to pay three independent companies for the garrison of Jamaica and the Leeward Islands. But at really critical times there was no force ready for service out of England, except the two regiments of Foot-Guards, a composite battalion of which was actually

sent across the Atlantic to suppress the Virginian rebellion of 1677.

It is true that the House of Commons has never grudged money for the English fleet, and indeed the neglect of the navy by Charles the Second has no unimportant bearing on that period of colonial history. But a fleet, however advantageous to the West Indies, would have been of little profit to the North American colonists, whose coasts were not then threatened. Their danger lay with the indigenous tribes of Indians, which in many cases were formidable enough, but they could hardly expect a mother country with no standing army to protect them against these. Every colony therefore possessed its own militia, which was duly organised into regiments and included practically every able-bodied white man in the community. In point of fact it is probable that the Colonies could have turned out a larger number of efficient men for military duty at short notice in 1680 than they can in the present year. It must not be forgotten meanwhile that those settlements which were most inclined to defy the royal authority were precisely those which least needed English protection.

But there was yet another service for which the Colonies looked not in vain to the mother country; for the settlement namely of disputes, private or public, among themselves, and for diplomatic relations with foreign countries. The simplest form of such dispute would be that of an individual who, having laboured in vain to obtain redress for some wrong, sought for it by petition at the hands of the King. Again an appeal lay from the Colonial Courts to the King in Council, or a litigant could bring forward his grievance by petition to the same source. The same right of resort to the sovereign is of course still in existence; and appeals from the Colonial

Courts are still heard by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

There were disputes also between individual colonies, and these were generally rancorous enough. Indeed it must be confessed that the English, for a race that aspires to rule a great Empire, are singularly narrow, jealous, and small-minded. Possibly it is this very characteristic which has made their Empire so wide, for if every man insists on founding a colony for himself, which was the English principle,¹ the result must inevitably be to cover the world with isolated settlements. And indeed we might go further, and ask without more ado whether this spirit of isolation and independence does not in itself absolutely prohibit the thought of United Empire. It is still rampant among us. No colonists are prouder of their country than the Australians, and yet four at any rate of its provinces shut out each other's produce, while there is actually a break of gauge in the railway that connects Victoria and New South Wales. Even more striking was the case of New Zealand in the days of the provincial governments; while to this day no Premier dares to form a Ministry without including at least one representative, irrespective of fitness, from each of the four provinces. But these quarrels, bitter though they have been, were as nothing to those of the New England States of America. There were differences about boundaries, differences about religion, differences about unoccupied territory, disputes about trade, disputes about home politics, disputes about the Indians. Indeed the provinces carried their ill will to each other so far that they allowed their traders to sell arms to the Indians with the full knowledge

that the traffic might be fatal to their neighbours.

Lastly there were the disputes between the governors and the governed, that is to say between the Chartered Companies and their subjects. These again were sufficiently bitter. In the volume before us there are three such disputes at issue, in Bermuda, Newfoundland, and Massachusetts. The cries of Bermuda are the loudest of any, for the original company had degenerated into a narrow oligarchy of monopolists and oppressors, as grinding in their exaction as the most pitiless of usurers. The unhappy inhabitants, though the character of Charles and of his Government were by that time pretty well known, begged earnestly to be allowed to pay the King's Customs and to be taken under the immediate command of the Crown. The Board of Trade and Plantations instead of welcoming the chance, as might have been expected, inquired patiently and painfully into the whole case and took the Company to task on a single point only, namely that it had intercepted petitions from the inhabitants to the King, or in other words ignored the Imperial authority. Finding the Company recalcitrant, it forthwith instructed the Attorney-General to proceed against the charter in the Courts of Law. A modern Colonial Secretary could hardly behave with more statesmanship, decency, and moderation.

The foregoing instance, purposely selected from the twentieth year of the Board of Trade and Plantations, sufficiently shows the difficulties with which it had to contend. Here was a case of flagrant misgovernment which would never have occurred but for the withdrawal of Imperial supervision during the Civil War. Nothing but reliance on continued anarchy in England could have emboldened so

¹ Between 1574 and 1660 sixty patents were granted for settlements by the Crown, which, remembering the powerlessness of the Crown from 1642 to 1660, gives an average of a new colony nearly every year.

trifling an association as the Bermuda Company to arrogate to itself virtual independence; and from reliance on anarchy to fomentation of anarchy is but a step. We shall now follow the action of the Crown in a far more serious case of the same kind.

The Board of Trade and Plantations had hardly settled down to work after the Restoration when a flood of bitter complaints were poured into it from all quarters against the chartered government of Massachusetts Bay. Neighbouring colonies complained of encroachment, subjects of tyranny and oppression, tender consciences of religious persecution. The Board of Customs represented that the colony went its own way in the matter of trade, ignored the King's Customs, and was raising up a stock of sheep to the prejudice of English merchants and in defiance of all regulations; and the Board of Trade confessed that it could get no information from the colony's agents in England respecting any matters whatever. Lastly it was reported that the fugitive regicides, Whalley and Goffe, had been not only harboured, but welcomed and honoured by the highest officers of the settlement.

There was perhaps nothing very surprising in all this. Massachusetts was a colony of irreconcilables, which, more fortunate than others of its kind, had enjoyed for nearly two generations the luxury of having its own way. The ruling sentiment of the community was religious bigotry, a thing which must in all cases be carefully distinguished from morality. Though nominally exiles in the cause of liberty of conscience, the ruling faction in Massachusetts lived solely in virtue of its intolerance. Persecution had early led to secession, and Roger Williams, driven from Boston, had sought a haven by founding a new settlement in Rhode Island;

wherefore Massachusetts hated Rhode Island as it professed to hate the devil. Readers of Hawthorne's *SCARLET LETTER* know something of the sanguinary code by which the saints of Boston sought to uphold sexual morality and the sanctity of the Sabbath; and there are abundant examples of the same scattered among the Calendars of State Papers. Above all their wrath was kindled against the Quakers, and though the Quakers were by no means such harmless and innocent citizens in those days as they are now represented to be, it must be confessed that the manner in which they were treated in Boston was positively barbarous.

The curious side of the whole question is that this tyrannous government was after all only a resolute minority. The persuasion which it favoured was the Congregational, governed by lay elders. They allowed to other sects, except Quakers and Papists, the free exercise of their religion, but refused to admit them to baptism and communion, and compelled them to attend their services under pain of a fine of five shillings. The one ceremony to which those outside their own sect were freely admitted was marriage, provided that the outsiders were well endowed. Nor did the religious disabilities end here, for all but members of the orthodox Church, that is to say five sixths of the population, were disfranchised and excluded from public office. Lastly the elect enjoyed peculiar advantages in the matter of justice and taxation. The magistrates observed less the letter of the law and the nature of the offence than the religious professions of the persons concerned; and it was difficult to obtain a verdict against a member of the congregation. Magistrates, elders, and ministers were exempt also from all taxation, and the government disposed of the revenue

without giving any account of it to the country. Such were the free institutions of Massachusetts. The people groaned piteously under them, but they were powerless to help themselves, so firmly had this resolute, bigoted, oligarchy set its foot on their necks.

And the government of Massachusetts was not only stern at home, but enterprising and rapacious abroad. In 1652 they passed beyond the boundaries fixed by their charter and appropriated the province of Maine; not content with Maine they swallowed up New Hampshire; and, still insatiate, were busy extending their dominion still further, when, as shall be told, the mother country at last interposed. But already at the Restoration it was a question whether the King of England or the Company of Massachusetts Bay should be ruler of New England; already the colony, with an arrogance which in its way was superb, had imposed an oath of allegiance to itself, and coined money (base money, be it observed,) with its own impress.

Such was the information which kept streaming into the office of the new Council of Plantations. If its members had urged the strongest measures immediately they could hardly have been blamed, but they did not, or it may be, dared not. "We have heard [they said in effect] but one side of the question, and we have therefore prepared a letter to the Colony of all possible tenderness, to encourage them to submit without alarm or distrust to the King's authority; we have not taken notice of their sympathy with regicides nor pressed upon them the Act of Navigation." And there presently arrived a specious letter of loyalty from Boston, "gratulatory and lowly," and of course stuffed with scriptural texts, which encouraged the King to take

the Council's advice. Accordingly he wrote the colonists a letter confirming their charter, granting amnesty for the past, and refusing to hold them responsible for its evils; asking only in return that they should observe their charter strictly, repeal all laws contrary to his government, take the oath of allegiance to him, and administer justice in his name. Taking the circumstances into consideration the tone of Charles's letter was not only moderate but generous.

Matters drifted on without further development until 1664, when the repeated representations of the dispossessed grantees of New Hampshire and Maine caused the Board of Trade to take more active measures. Even then its policy was of the mildest. It determined to send out four Commissioners to inspect and report on the whole of the colonies of New England. The instructions to these Commissioners were most tactful. They were to land at Boston, but if ill-received were to go round first to the other settlements, gain them over, and then returning to Massachusetts endeavour by the gentlest means to persuade the Government to grant the very small concessions which the King had asked of them. They were to be particularly careful to avoid any action that might irritate religious susceptibilities. And finally, to calm any jealous suspicions, the King sent a letter to Boston explaining that the Commissioners were indeed coming, but with no designs on the liberties of the Colonies; their mission was only to adjust disputed boundaries and prevent further quarrelling, to inquire into complaints made by foreign princes, to ascertain the strength of their foreign neighbours, and to report upon the American settlements at large.

Mild and conciliatory as this letter was, it threw Massachusetts into

mingled wrath and fear. The Commissioners meanwhile set sail, and began operations by driving the Dutch from the Delaware and from New York, and ridding the English settlements of an unwelcome foreign neighbour. But this useful work was hardly done when the ruling powers at Massachusetts produced a long wailing petition to the King. How, they asked plaintively, how can you say that you have no design upon our liberties, when you send out commissioners to hear complaints against the Colonies? "Sir, the all-knowing God, He knows our greatest ambition is to live a pure and a quiet life in a corner of the world without offence to God or man," and so forth, in a tone that, but for the inevitable cant of it, might pass for an early specimen of American humour.

The Commissioners soon discovered that they were not welcome at Boston, and went on accordingly to the other Colonies. Rhode Island, who had suffered so much from her neighbours and in particular from Massachusetts, welcomed her deliverers with open arms. New Plymouth and Connecticut also thanked the King with joy for his goodness in inquiring into their state. Even in New Hampshire and Maine the Commissioners were successful, though the Boston Government actually issued a commission to certain persons in Maine to obstruct them, and gave general orders to New Hampshire to show no obedience to them. So they went through the settlements hearing complaints, and redressing them where they could. Some of the grievances were not pleasant to hear. The people of Portsmouth in New Hampshire represented that Massachusetts would not even allow them decent burial of their dead. Rhode Island preferred a still blacker accusation. Massachusetts had for twenty years actually

subsidised a petty Indian chief to annoy them, had invaded her territory, and carried off cattle and even men. These were wrongs not easily to be redressed. The Commissioners could only decide that Massachusetts had no right to New Hampshire or Maine, and reserve the two settlements, pending further instructions, for the King. They then returned to Boston.

Here their failure was complete. The ruling faction had seized the opportunity to fill the settlement with sinister rumours. The Commissioners had been saddled on the Governor for entertainment and had cost the country £300; they were going to exact a shilling an acre, and a large sum besides; they were going to abridge the privileges and liberties of the colony; this Commissioner was a papist; that had lived with a naughty woman; a third was their professed enemy. The statements were one and all absolutely false, but they served their purpose. The Commissioners were thwarted, obstructed, and insulted wherever they turned; and finally a small matter brought them into furious conflict with the government. At that time the penalty for rebellion against parents in Massachusetts was death. A prisoner in Boston gaol, who for this alleged crime had stood for an hour under the gallows with a rope round his neck, received thirty-nine lashes, and been committed to prison pending payment of an impossible fine, appealed to the Commissioners, and the Commissioners received his appeal. The ruling faction was furious, and took no pains to conceal it. One imperious letter to the unwelcome strangers succeeded another as their interposition in the affairs of the neighbouring colonies became more fully known; and after a last angry correspondence, wherein the Commissioners told the Governor and Council that their letter was "full of

untruth and wanting in grammar construction," they took their leave, not disguising from themselves that their mission, so far as regarded Boston, had completely failed.

On their return they presented their report. It is no use, they said, to palter with such people. They have violated their charter in a hundred ways, and the only thing to be done is to recall it. King Charles the First was on the point of doing so in 1637, but was prevented by troubles at home. They hope to tire you out by writing; they say that they can easily spin out seven years in this way, and that before that a change may come; nay, some have even dared to whisper that a change might be already on its way with the present Dutch war. In this last sentence lies the clue to the first sixty years of the history of Massachusetts; England's embarrassment was Boston's opportunity.

And so it happened in 1665. The King, who had by this time assumed a more peremptory tone, formally withdrew his Commissioners and ordered the Government at Boston to send home agents to explain its conduct, among whom two of the most violent recalcitrants were summoned to appear by name. And then a war broke out with France which altered the whole situation. The King asked Massachusetts if she would give any help in the defence of the West Indian Islands. The colony, pardonably enough, refused; but she did not fail to add, which she safely could at such a crisis, that she could not accept the King's last orders, could not in fact believe them to be his. A few of the unfortunate inhabitants who, emboldened by the Commissioners' visit, had petitioned for submission to the King, were persecuted with a virulence that effectually checked similar demonstrations for the future. Nevertheless as a mild concession, the

Government sent a ship's load of provisions to the English fleet at Barbados, which Charles did not fail to acknowledge with the warmest thanks. This system of alternately disobeying orders and softening their disobedience with timely presents they now proceeded to carry further.

In 1667 came the news that the Dutch had sailed up the Medway and threatened London, and that Clarendon, who appears to have advised the original despatch of the Commissioners, had been driven in disgrace from the Court. This was an opportunity not to be missed. In 1668 the Government of Massachusetts marched an armed force into Maine and re-occupied it, without bloodshed indeed but only just without it, although the Commissioners had expressly taken the province into the King's hands; but lest this should be mistaken for a proof of insubordination, they presented the King with a few dozen masts for his fleet. Having thus made their loyalty clear, they attempted to extract tribute from the Indians of some disputed territory, but were answered that the chiefs would pay to King Charles and to nobody else; whereupon in the following year, 1670, they seized the territory in question, to the boundless indignation of the neighbouring colonies. Of King Charles himself they took very little notice except to protest against the restitution of Nova Scotia to the French, for they recognised that the French were not only undesirable neighbours, but also the most formidable obstacle to their own ambition.

Thus matters drifted till in 1675 the wheel turned, and Massachusetts herself was in trouble. The Indians, irritated by her gross ill-treatment, rose in an insurrection which attained at one moment to a formidable height. The English Government on the other hand was comparatively

free. The claimants to the disputed provinces had never ceased to urge their rights upon the Board of Trade; the Board of Customs and the English merchants represented alike that it was outrageous for Massachusetts alone of English possessions to be exempt from the Acts of Navigation, and that it was high time for something to be done.

But what was to be done? The Commissioners had proved a failure; a demand for agents from the colony had been contemptuously ignored. It was decided to send over a special emissary, one Edward Randolph, with a letter from the King, ordering agents to be sent from Boston to England within six months, there to answer sundry complaints against the government. Randolph duly sailed, and in June, 1676, presented himself at Boston. The Council read the King's letter, informed Randolph that of course they would answer it speedily, and told him that, if he had no further directions to give them from the King, he had better go. In private conversation, however, the Governor gave him to understand that Massachusetts did not think itself bound by any English laws, that its own were sufficient, and that it admitted no appeal to the King. Meanwhile of course reports were sedulously spread that the King nourished every description of evil design against the civil and religious liberties of the colony; and though the oppressed majority took heart of grace to express their loyalty to the King and their hatred of the government, Randolph soon perceived that he was not popular with the ruling faction. So Randolph came home and made his report, which contained but two particulars that the Board of Trade had not heard before a hundred times. These were that Massachusetts had already picked a quarrel with New

York, and that, not content with defying all English regulations as to trade, she was actually encroaching on her French neighbours, in spite of repeated remonstrances from the French Governor, whereby the inhabitants lived in constant fear of a French invasion and were more miserable than ever.

After a time the answer of Boston arrived and was found to contain nothing but excuses. The Colonial Government had an Indian war and an epidemic of sickness on its hands, and really could not find time to obey the King's orders. These excuses, as Randolph at once explained, were no better than lies; peace with the Indians had been signed before his departure from New England, and the death of three or four rich men from old age did not constitute an epidemic. The colony was peremptorily ordered to send over two agents without delay, and at the end of 1676 they at last made their appearance.

Then Randolph at once confronted them with the charges that had remained unanswered for more than ten years, usurpation of territory, the formation of an independent republic, protection of regicides, issue of their own coin, religious persecution, violation of the Acts of Trade, and consequent loss to the King's Customs. The agents in vain pleaded that they had power only to treat of matters affecting the disputed property of New Hampshire and Maine; the Board of Trade was peremptory, and insisted that the charges should be met. Randolph could prove every charge up to the hilt, and the agents could but plead guilty with many promises of amendment. They were kept in the country sorely against their will, till February, 1679, when the pressure of the Popish Plot and other domestic troubles induced the King to let them go, with strict injunctions that Mas-

Massachusetts must mend her ways without delay and send over two more agents with more extensive powers.

Once more fortune had favoured Massachusetts, for the Popish Plot came just in the nick of time to save her. This stroke of luck, and, if Randolph's repeated statements are to be believed, the encouragement of disloyal factions in England, strengthened the colony in her insubordination. The King had at last decided to take New Hampshire into his own hands, and Randolph was sent out to set the government in order. Having done so, he proceeded to Boston to enforce the Acts of Trade and Navigation, and then his troubles began in earnest. In spite of fair promises the government of Massachusetts was not one whit altered, and all the old abuses were in full vigour. Randolph's attempts to bring the trade under the Navigation Acts were met with violent opposition. Captains threatened to knock him on the head for interfering, and the courts of law not only refused to confirm his seizures, but cast him in heavy damages and refused his right of appeal to the Crown. Wearing out and in terror of his life, he begged that strong measures might be taken at once. "For the King to write more letters," he said, "will signify no more than the London Gazette."

Meanwhile no agents had been sent home. The Government of Massachusetts had sympathetic correspondents in England; they knew that the King was in difficulties over the Exclusion Bill and other matters, and with delightful sarcasm excused themselves on the ground that his Majesty and his Privy Council must be occupied with matters of greater importance. In fact their continued good fortune, favourably interpreted by their religious bigotry, made them think themselves invulnerable. But they were reckoning without Edward

Randolph, to whom the delay and hesitation in taking the rebellious colony by the throat seemed intolerable and absurd. Urged by his repeated representations, the King in 1680 sent an ultimatum to Boston. It was received with hardly-disguised contempt, and then at last, though not till after long delay, Charles instructed the Attorney-General to impeach the charter of Massachusetts in the English Courts, and therewith the resistance of the colony collapsed.

The case of Massachusetts though flagrant was not singular. The disloyalty and disunion among the settlements in New England was matched by that among the West Indian Islands. Barbados, secure to windward, would not move a finger to save the Leeward Islands from being eaten up by Caribs, though the strongholds of those savages were islands that lay within her jurisdiction. Even to this day she persists in standing alone. The Bahamas again were no better than nests of pirates which preyed impartially on the ships of all nations, and even Jamaica was by no means guiltless of piracy. The Leeward Islands alone, trembling before the presence of a French fleet, kept compactly together and leaned wholly on the mother country. Elsewhere disloyalty was rife. Barbados was always suspicious and obstructive towards England, and Jamaica, with a strong leaven of Cromwell's old soldiers, could speak words as mutinous as Massachusetts herself. In fact it is hardly too much to say that at this period the eyes of all the Colonies were bent on Massachusetts,¹ and that many of them were ready, if she triumphed, to take their cue from her. And indeed it seems likely that if Massachusetts had succeeded in gaining her independence she would

¹ This expression is actually used by one of the Commissioners in 1666, but it probably refers to the American Colonies only.

by her restless energy, her unscrupulousness, and the iron discipline of her rule have established herself even then as the dominant power among the English in North America.

And now, notwithstanding her defeat in the eighteenth century, the eyes not only of the English Colonies but of England herself are bent upon Massachusetts to this day. What Boston was in 1660, that she was in 1774. The dangerous neighbour in Canada had been removed by the arms of England, and the question was raised of contribution to Imperial funds for Imperial defence. It is unnecessary to go again into the well-known story; but we may observe that it becomes more evident, from every fresh light that is shed on the history of that memorable quarrel, that the Americans were guided less by principle than by prejudice. We do not blame them on that account; we only observe the fact, for it is full of significance for us. Many volumes have been written to explain why America was lost to England, but the truth is that it was practically lost in the first two generations of its existence. Edward Randolph saved it for a century, but he came too late to do more.

So the traditions of Randolph have perished, and those of Massachusetts endure triumphant to this day. The story of the eighteenth century has sunk very deeply into English hearts.

Since 1781 a still small voice has rung perpetually in the ears of English statesmen, and the word that it speaks is *America*. When forty years ago some new settlements in a new continent called for self-government, Lord John Russell granted it without any reservation. No tropical territory was withheld, no provision was made for a central government, no stipulation was introduced that trade should be free within the continent if not without it. The young communities were launched on their voyage with the advice to follow America and prosper. They, and not they alone of our self-governing colonies, have followed her only too faithfully; and now the question remains whether she will lead them. For years the evils of the professional politician and of the purchase of votes by wholesale misapplication of public funds have been condemned by thoughtful men as indications of rottenness; but they were always silenced by the cry of American prosperity. Recent events seem to indicate that the thoughtful men were after all not far wrong, and that a vicious system has brought America dangerously close to a great disaster. If the day ever comes when it shall be with our Australian colonies as it was a century ago with our colonies in America, they will at least have had ample time and opportunity for deciding which part of their model shall be taken and which shall be left.